MINSTRELS OF GOD
(PART 1)
BY
BANKEY BEHARI

What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

1. Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising y Indian of character having faith in Bharata and her culture Bhar Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by re merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informa and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to s them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent v of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their li ture, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other langu and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharata and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

General Editors

K. M. MUNSHI

N. CHANDRASEKHARA AIYER

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(Part I)

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 1-12-0.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata,* summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it; the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sages in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
3rd October, 1951.

K. M. MUNSHI

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"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean one?
Not one." (*Book of Job-XIV-4*)

Politicians are not saints and saints will not be politicians. The one is for the worship and wooing of the world—*prakriti*—the womb of rebirth of the body-consciousness—the Source of Suffering: whose mis-styled Karma Yoga is an attempt to produce corn by thrashing the husk. The saint is out to break this creature of *maya*, which, through births has been responsible for endless suffering—a suffering of which the Enlightened One said:—

> Less are the waters of the Oceans four,
> Than all the waste of waters shed in tears
> By heart of man, who mourneth touched by ill
> Why waste thy life brooding in bitter woe![1]

and from which when liberated by renunciation of all sensual comforts, *tapas* and meditation cried out:

> *Anéka játisangsârang;*
> *Sandháwissang anibhisang;*
> *Gahakárakangawesanto;*
> *Dukhájátipunappunang.*
> *Gahakárakadithósi;*
> *Punagehang nakáhasi;*
> *Sabhátephásukhábhaggâ;*
> *Gahakútangwisang khitang;*
> *Wisangkháragatang chittang;*
> *Janhánangkhayamajhagá.*

[1]*Psalms of Sisters* by Mrs. Rhys Davies.

Many a House of Life
Hath held me—seeking ever Him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow fraught;
sore was my ceaseless strife
But now
Thou Builder of the Tabernacle—Thou!,
I know Thee! Never shalt Thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, Nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay;
Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!
Delusion fashioned it!
Safe pass I thence—Deliverance to obtain.

(*Light of Asia*—Arnold p. 115)

and gave to the world the essential core of the gospel of life:—

"Desire is the cause of suffering. Desirelessness is the end of suffering"—ending it with memorable words pointing the path, "Evil swells the debts to pay. Good delivers and acquits. Shun evil, follow good. Hold sway over Thyself. This is the way."

As to the ambit of this desire well has Christopher Harvey said:—

The whole world round is not enough to fill
The heart's three corners, but it craveth still,
Only the Trinity that made it can
Suffice the vast triangled heart of Man.

Beautifully and eloquently did the great Dhammapani express it when, in answer to the question, 'Mother, how long are we to be a prey to desires (Kama)?' she merely took a handful of ashes and let them fly; meaning thereby 'until your desire—body (subtle Karmic body)—is worked

out.' The Buddha hearing of this reply complimented her saying "Dhammapani is wise. I would have given the same reply".

At present there is a blind and urgent craze to peer with worldly, distorted vision into the virgin pastures of Religion and Spirituality. The need for a perfect ethical life as a necessary prelude to a spiritual life and to total sannyasa (renunciation) is little understood. Underhill urges the point quoting various European saints and mystics to the effect:—

"The soul should find rest in no fleshly thought
Nor earthly affection"—Walter Hilton.

"In order to approach the Absolute, mystics must withdraw from everything even themselves."—Récéjae.

"The divine furnace of purifying love demands the deliberate embrace of active suffering"—Catherine of Genoa.

"Let me suffer or die"—Teresa

"Suffering is the ancient law of love".—Suso

"If suffering was sold in the market I would hurry to buy it."—Mother Mary Du Bourg.

"He who desires to be wholly immersed in the fathomless sea of My Godhead must also be deeply immersed in the deep sea of bitter sorrow:.....the deeper and more spiritually a man crushes himself beneath all things, the more supernaturally will he be drawn far above all things." —Tauler.

Underhill adds: "The mystics therefore always welcome and often court pain, for......two reasons. The first is 'the contempt for the phenomena, nasty as well as nice—the longing to be free from all the fetters of sense—which often goes with the passion for invisible things' and was carried

to logical conclusion by St. Francis when he insisted that the vermin were as much his brothers as the birds.....and actually kissed the lepers he once hated. The second reason was 'Self surrender' to the will of the Absolute which is the mainspring of mystic life."[2]

Our object in saying this is that complete detachment from worldly objects and a perfectly ethical life are preliminaries to entry into the Holy and Eternal Temple of Religion. The reproach laid at the door of the politician applies with double force to the fake religious leader—whose *sadhana* consists only in donning sack cloth or ochre and thereby getting a disguise in which to play the parasite on the poor householder, instead of imparting a living religion and assisting him out of his spiritual troubles by conferring peace on him.[3] He is today becoming even more fully a man of the world and a man of property by fighting elections, building ashrams and vying with the rich in holding *bhandaras* (festivities). It is tragic to see sannyasis ride caparisoned elephants decked with paraphernalia—as *mahants* of religious institutions. They forget that they are heirs to the great heritage left by the Rishis who passed their lives in solitary hermitages living on scanty meals of berries or fruits. As to building ashrams, what has become of religion and of former precepts such as those found in the lines from saint Namdeo:

> Deep is the foundation laid, and a magnificent castle is built thereupon. But to what purpose is all that?
> It is vanity, pride and idle show, all will pass off.
> Do you not see that Rishi Markandey, who is to live for ages has no more than a thatched hut for shelter against rain and storms?
> Remember thy Creator Sri Rama, He alone is eternal. All else is temporal and shall pass away.[4]

[2]Mysticism—p. 221, 222, 223.

[3]'*prayaso lokatapena tapyante sadhavo janah*'—The saints consume themselves to kindle the world.

[4]For text, vide Appendix item 1.

Ye who profess to live as the *Gita* requires, do you consider (vide *Samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanah*—VI 8) a clod of earth and a bar of gold as equal in value in your eyes? Do you follow the Lord's advice (vide *aniketah* XII 19) not to build a house and (vide *Sarvārambhaparityāgi* XII 16)—not to start a new enterprise? Indeed no! On the other hand you are acting quite otherwise; for if on becoming a sannyasin you renounce your children, you take a train of disciples and these disciples are not generally sadhus but come from among the seths and worldly ones! Does the Gospel of sannyasa which forbids even the sojourn of more than a day under a tree, permit you such activities as the building of ashrams? This greed on the part of many sannyasis for wealth, followers and name has been responsible for bringing real trouble to the small number of genuine religious *jigyasus* (aspirants) who having sacrificed all to gain self-realisation find themselves hampered in their worship of Truth, in solitude, for lack of a loaf of bread and a tin-shed or a straw-cottage for shelter. I can only say 'rivet not your eyes on Karma Kand and raise not your cudgels against those in power, but rather by your renunciation, love of Truth and true sannyasa from worldly affairs meditate on the Lord and realise the self. Remember that the Lord says "*traigunya-viṣaya vedā, nistraigunyo bhavā Arjuna.*" (Transcend world-consciousness and dwell in the sublime light of Divinity—*Gita* II—45) and again "*anityaṁ asukhaṁ lokaṁ imaṁ prāpya bhajasvamām*" (*Gita* IX—33), "Realising the ephemeral nature of existence, make it the road for realisation. This world will pass away, and is the abode of sorrow. Give it up and worship Me constantly" (IX 33). Enjoining His worship the Lord in other words says: "You who are mere dust and who shake at every puff of wind, cease from calling yourself Brahma!—God. You are a puny man—a mere creature. Away with egoism and attachments and then only you shall dwell

in the eternal peace; *nirmamo nirahaṁkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati.*" (*Gita* II—71).

Seeing their present perverted state I would draw the attention of those in the orders to beware of this class of sadhus who are in pursuit of power, name, wealth and disciples, remembering the words of Voltaire and praying like him, "O God! save me from my friends. Of my enemies I shall take care of myself". I would enjoin the genuine sadhus to avoid association with such friends, at all costs for they will shatter their faith in the Lord.

I say so because *satsang* is the core of religious life, and the association at every step with such religious leaders as are established in *asat* ministering to the grosser and subtler faculties of man—is *kusang* (false association) and the way to rebirth and hell. Beware of pseudo-leaders. As has always been the call in India—the sadhu and sannyasin will be tested by his *vairagya*—genuine renunciation of all the fleeting phantom shadows the world holds dear. "Quit the world!" shall be inscribed in glittering words on his cottage pointing to the beautiful *upadesh* of Lord Buddha to His first disciples:

Bitter as serpent's poison are desires
Of senses, whereafter youthful fools do yearn.

(Sumedha—p. 166.)

On fire is all the world, is all in flames.
Ablaze is all the world, the heav'ns do quake!
But that which quaketh not, that *ever sure*,
That priceless thing unheeded by world
Even NORM—that hath the Buddha taught
To me—therein my mind delighted dwells.

(Sisupacala—p. 100.)

Like spears and javelins are the joy of sense
That pierce and rend our mortal frame,
Those that thou speaketh of as the joy of life
Joys of that ilk, to me are nothing worth—

(Upalavanna p. 114-115)

—*Psalms of Sisters* by Mrs. Rhys Davies.

A word of warning also to those in power today, who through sheer ignorance are dabbling with the Spirit—Religion of India. It is better for them to eschew a subject of which they can know nothing unless their life is purified by the vow of celibacy, austerity, *tapas,* and meditation. I have to say "Ye are trespassers in a holy field, into which ye must guard against intruding and no more think of striking a blow against *dharma*—the spirit of India. It is true that shadows cannot affect Reality and that in the long run your efforts will be futile but this antagonism will meanwhile lead to great suffering and unrest. You must remember man cannot live by bread alone. Some day you will feel the necessity of living on a spiritual plane. You have already done enough harm to yourselves. Do not desire and insist on proselytising to your creed, ye politicians!"

In this matter I shall simply draw their attention to two memorable quotations:—

"Respect the conscience of others and never impose upon them even the Truth. Break not forcibly the yoke of slaves who love their yoke. Be devoted always, never be too zealous. If fools rejoice in their folly, it is cruel to deprive them of it without restoring their reason. We must have patience. We must leave the *fakir* to his chains and the old world to its idols waiting till all this shall end of itself. Lose not time in denouncing the darkness with vain disputations. Make the light shine but let it not be the light of a consuming torch. Overthrow henceforth neither

the statues of Jupiter nor of St. Nicholas even when an imbecile people attempt to adore St. Nicholas. Philosophers, respect relics, if you wish not your books to be burned. The light shines for all men coming into the world, but all have a right to open or shut their eyes as they please." (*In re* Fifth Veda.)

"It is strange that the King of France should interest himself so much in a matter which concerns only God while He whom it does concern seems to have left it wholly to our discretion. Had it been agreeable to the Creator that all nations should have the same form of worship, would it not have been as easy for Him in His Omnipotence to have created all men with the same sentiments and dispositions and to have inspired them with the same notions of true religion as to endow them with such different temperaments and inclinations. Ought we not to believe that the true God has as much pleasure in being honoured by a variety of forms and ceremonies as in being praised and glorified by a number of different creatures." (Reply to the Christian Mission of Louis XIV, by the King of Siam).

My advice is "Interfere not with religion! Too much policy kills. Be not destroyers if ye can't be builders". Ye must understand cardinal principles of religion, be conversant with the history of religion, with discrimination between flesh and spirit and the call of either. And this ye can do in the shortest time by the study of the lives of the saints. Hence no apology is needed for this work. Rather it is most needed at this time.

First and foremost I must define a saint in the most simple manner. He is a Karmayogin, a true adherent of the *nishkama karma yoga* as propounded in the *Bhagawad Gita*. That he understands his subject well is a fact proved by his living it. Many profess to be karmayogins but misunderstand and misinterpret the teachings of *Gita*. This is

because they work under a delusion being solely body-conscious; serving the relationships of the body as also the country in which the body is born—and considering that thereby they are paving the way to *mukti*—of which Karmayoga is the only path. If they remembered the *upadesh* of the Lord in *Gita* wherein He explains Karma,

> *'Kiṁ karma kim akarme'ti kavayo 'py atra mohitāh*
> *Tat te karma pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvā mokṣyase' śubhāt.'* (IV 16)

i.e., the wise are bewildered as to what is action and what is inaction, so I shall declare it whereby ye shall gain emancipation and after stating, *'yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko ayam karmabandhanah'* (III 9).

i.e., save loving sacrifice made at the altar of Divinity, all other activities create bondage leading to rebirth, enjoins how to perform it *'kṛtaṁ karma pūrvair api mumuksubhih* (IV 15)':

Which means not every activity is *karma* (in detail see *Gita* XVIII-48, 13, 14)[5] however disinterestedly it may be performed by a worshipper of the body. Only that is karma which the enlightened individual performs to emancipate himself from the cycle of rebirth. Who is enlightened? He who knows that in desire for the world

[5]*'Sahjam karma kaunteya sadosham api na tyajet*
Sarvarambha hi dosena dhumena'gnir iva 'vrtah. (*XVII* 48).

i.e. all activities of the world, born of the qualities (*gunas*) are clouded with ignorance, as fire by smoke.

'pancai 'tani mahabaho karanani nibodha me
Samkhye kritante proktani siddhaye sarvakarmanam.
Adhisthonam tatha karta karanam ca prthagvidham
Vividhas ca prthakcesta daivam cai 'va 'tra pancamam. (XVIII, 13, 14)'

i.e. Five factors lead to the constitution of karma, according to the *samkhya* system. They are the body, ego (body-consciousness), organs, the impelling desires (new or old born of *prarabdh*) and *Daiva* (the divine Controller and Dispenser).

lies the womb of suffering and in the cessation of desire lies eternal peace. In short a karmayogin must needs be a seeker after truth, an eschewer of the Phantom—which is today and tomorrow is not. The country of the karmayogin is the country of the soul which is as different from that of the body as darkness is from light, for the one is Divine the other earthly, the one is eternal, the other transient. The patriotism of the karmayogin is expressed in his love of humanity at large—in his belief in Universal Brotherhood. He is ready to answer the call of the spirit and to subdue the sensual demands of the flesh. He is a martyr who surrenders all to the spirit. He has understood that in the game of life the cards are dealt to us according to our past karmas and it is for us to select and play them well or badly. The karmayogin decides to play well, because he has meditated and now can exclaim with Job "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean one" and seated among the ashes of his burnt-out house and goods, lifts up his hands in prayer and says "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord." (Job I 21). He often sits unperturbed observing with unconcern affairs of great consequence as sat Janak at the news of the fire in his capital Mithila, and like him, exclaims:

> *'Anantam bata me vittaṁ yasya me nāsti kiñcana*
> *Mithilāyāṁ pradīptāyāṁ na me kiñcit pradahyate.*
>
> (*Mahabharata*—Santiparva VII, 7).

i.e. "What if my capital burns? I suffer not a whit in the peace of my mind nor do I rejoice if more kingdoms come under its sway, because I am established in the infinite peace of unity-consciousness (of the atman), beyond this mutable world." Or again we often see him praying for the destruction of his worldly attachments that persist in

the form of relationships of the flesh and he exclaims with joy when his wish is fulfilled in the same spirit in which Blessed Angela of Foligus rejoiced, and said to herself:— "In that time and by God's will died my mother who was a great hindrance unto me in following the ways of God: my husband died likewise, and in a short time there died all my children. And because I had commenced to follow the aforesaid way, and had prayed God that He would rid me of them, I had great consolation by their deaths, albeit I did also feel grief."

This is no callousness on the part of the recluse but rather an intense desire to escape from the shell of individuality into the ocean of universality.

It is the result of Enlightenment which has made the greatest truths enter his mind:

> "The soul that hath placed her whole love and desire in Thee can never find satisfaction but in Thee."

"He who in *this* life does not realise the Atman, caters for endless suffering in the cycle of rebirth" (*Kathopnishad*)[6]

"O my consort, I tell you the Supreme Truth" says Lord Shiva. "The only supreme truth is the worship of the Lord, all this world is an empty show, a dream and an illusion" (*Ramayana*)[7]

"First this human existence is the fruit of great spiritual works in past lives, and then if you take it, without the grace of the Lord, without the boatman as your teacher, and

[6]'*Yeh bedaskad bodhum praksarerasya vibhrama*
Tatah sargesu lokesu sariratvaya kalpate.'

[7]'*Uma kahon main anubhav apna*
Sat haribhajan jagut sab sapna.'

without crossing the ocean of existence in this life you are a murderer of the spirit—the Atman" (*Bhagwat*)[8]

All this leads to the one great Supreme Experience enunciated by St. Paul (*vide* "His sermons" by Dr. Tauler in the *Inner Way*—p. 114).

"In the truest death of all created things, the sweetest and most natural life is hidden."

Another way of expressing the Karma-Yoga message in *Gita* and understood and lived by the saint is "Naked proceed to naked Christ or sell all and follow him."

But why such an austere view of life—mocking it and discarding it as empty—because man is born to woo the Lord by banishing the world from his life.

This is a truth which cannot escape the eye of even the most worldly and body-conscious provided he is true to himself. Here is support for what I say. I quote from *The Syrian Pageant* by W. T. F. Castle, p. 44-45 regarding the great experience of Alexander the Great:—

"In 324 *B.C.* Alexander returning through Persia after the great campaign of conquest which had brought Afghanistan, Turkestan and parts of India into subjection, visited the tomb of Cyrus, the only man comparable to him. 'It was a cherished ambition (wrote his historian Arrian) to visit the tomb of Cyrus'—when he took Persia, Alexander found the tomb rifled and the inscription effaced which once bore the words—'O man, whosoever thou art, and from whencesoever thou comest (for that thou wilt come I know) I am Cyrus (529 B.C.) who founded the Empire of the Persians. Grudge me not therefore this little earth that covers my body'."

[8]*Nridehmamadyam sulbhani sudurlabham driham sukalpam Guru karndharam.*

Maya anukulen nabhastveritam puman bhavabhdim na taret sa atmaha. (Skh XI—20-17).

Two brief centuries had sufficed to show that so small a plot had been begrudged to the ruler of dominions so wide. Alexander was "*sore* moved when he called to mind the uncertainty of life and the vicissitudes of things. In 323 B.C. he died."

Here we are reminded of the great lines of the poet who sang:—

> 'Now is the time for stripping the spirit bare,
> Time for the burning of days ended and gone...
> Let them go to the fire with never a look behind,
> The world that was ours is a world that is ours no more.'
>
> (*Ibid* p. 82)

Such reminders urge the saint to seek realisation and the quest teaches him the truth of the great saying of *Gita* that *abhyasa* and *vairagya*, worship and renunciation, are the two wings on which the Jiva-Atman (soul) can fly to the abode of Eternal Freedom and Bliss. The saint therefore decides to abandon himself completely to surrender himself (*sharanagati*)—to the Lord's Lotus Feet. Of this approach to the Lord, Lucie Christine observes in her Journal; "His march is a dash from the prison of 'I'-hood and emergence into the Land of Freedom," *i.e.* towards the Lotus Feet of Sri Radha Krishna. In short this is the problem and here the journey begins.

Some day you will have to face this problem. You will stand confronting the sphinx trying to fathom the mystery behind its face. How long shall ye remain imprisoned in this body like the oyster in its shell? The age-old desire for freedom will struggle to get free. Truth will struggle to shine forth. You cannot curb it for ever. You cannot smother it for an unlimited time. You will have to answer the call of the saint—the Karma-Yogin of *Gita*. It shall be the call to the erstwhile prodigal, wasting the precious soul in the stony pastures of *prakriti* (illusion), to return to the bosom of the loving Father. It will be the call to enter into the life of the spirit. It will be an

impelling call to break through the dreamy cobwebs created by the mind in time and to enter the Eternal realm of supreme Light. It will be the call to recognize the real value of things. It will not be the divorce from *all* human activities but a drastic and direct reorientation of original tendencies, gathering up scattered *chaitanya* (effulgence of spiritual or atmic-consciousness) and crystallizing and forming it into prisms that will adorn and decorate the breast and abode of Sri Radha Krishna. It will be a call raising the level of consciousness to a height where the Transcendental can be reflected in it. It will be a call transmuting the emotions rushing with speed towards dead *prakritic* objects so that they are expressed in divine ecstasies. It will be a call transforming life from prose into a poetry throbbing with divine life scattering scintillations of divine fire and moving with stately and majestic cadence. It will be a call whereby man may regain the lost kingdom of the soul to which he was heir by divine birth, and offering it in a spirit of perfect surrender, as a veritable *kaustubha*—the Divine Kohi-noor—to dangle on the bosom of the Supreme Deity, Sri Radha Krishna. It will be the dynamic call of Vedanta—the glittering gift and grace of the Lord—*bhakti,* the crown of all *jnana* (wisdom) and experience in the divine realm.

It will be a great moment in life—when tears shed in separation shall be turned into pearls by the Divine touch and life-giving embrace of the Beloved. Then shall be felt the mighty kinship between the blade of grass, with the sun and the creator Brahma.[9] The spirit that was in bondage in the body will now became a member of Universal Brotherhood. The patriotism that erstwhile was circumscribed to the country of the body will broaden and the country of the soul will far extend, beyond the hemispheres. True it is a long and tiring way from the infant's cry for food and

[9]Cp. St. Francis addresses 'My little sisters, the birds, brother sun, sister water and mother earth.'

shelter to the conscious cry of the saint for God. But it has to be wooed and pursued. From the unspiritual world chaos, one will have to be born into divine cosmos. 'No cross no crown'—at every step is written on the path. In striving and aspiring to realise the source of Reality—God, the trivialities of the world that intoxicate the worldly-wise shall be despised by the Godly-wise. The seeker will have to aim high, work hard, and aspire to make effort constantly to dwell above temporal allurements in Reality and Eternity. Those who have trodden the Great Path, says Eckhart, "know ardent desire and abject humility work wonders. I vow, God is omnipotent, but He is impotent to thwart the humble soul with towering aspiration. And where I cannot master God and bend Him to my will it is because I fail either in will or meekness. I say, and I would stake my life upon it, that by *WILL* a man might pierce a wall of steel, and accordingly we read about St. Peter that on catching sight of Jesus he walked upon the water in his eagerness to meet Him."[10] What Eckhart says, is the experience of all saints. After studying the History of the Religions of the world, Swami Rama Tirtha quotes an example:—

"Garibaldi while living in a hotel in Italy heard that a man was running amuck, sword in hand, threatening the lives of all he encountered. There were hundreds of persons but none could venture forth and subdue him. Hearing of it Garibaldi came out of his room without a sword or stick in hand; all the rest were fleeing whilst he ran up to the man and said, 'Stop and throw down your sword'. The man stopped and threw down the sword immediately." (*In the Woods of God-Realization,* Vol. IV—p. 361). And again:

[10]*Meister Eckhart* p. 133.

"Imagine Napoleon running forward amid a hail of bullets without suffering a scratch and crying 'Come! follow me; The bullet which will kill Napoleon is not made.' Nothing is impossible. The Alps shall be no barrier." (*Ibid* p. 101).

On this important subject we quote two instances from the martyrs of the East:

"Mashashige, the hero who fought for the Mikado and although he knew that his cause was already lost, yet carried on guerrilla warfare with the usurper thereby securing a temporary restitution of the Mikado's power claimed no reward when his work was accomplished."

"What is thy last wish?" said he to his brother, as wounded unto death they both emerged from their last terrible battle with the Shognis hosts. Smiling he listened to the swift reply, "I wish to be born again to strike a blow for the Mikado" and then added, "though the Buddhists teach that such wishes are sinful and lead to the hell of Asuras, yet not for one but for seven lives do I wish to be reborn for the same end," thus each fell by the other's sword........................Masatoura, the son of Mashashige, refused the first beauty of the court who was deeply attached to him, when the Mikado offered her to him as a reward for his hereditary loyalty, remarking '*that his life was for death and not for love,*' and again—

"Sulaiman Khan Babi the martyr (1852 A.D.) pierced with deep wounds in which burned a lighted wick hastened as a bridegroom to the place of execution singing with exultation!" (*Ibid*—p. 383-384).

Such devotion to ideal truth; such surrender and renunciation, such dogged and unswerving determination mark the life of the saint. He follows in the footsteps of his forerunners—like Jesus who died on the Cross, Socrates who died in prison, Sarmad who died under the axe, Galileo

who died in chains, and Lavoisier who died on the gallows. The saint is ever prepared to pay the price of his bold independent thought and bears out the great truth and axiom of spirituality.

Love, realisation, surrender, humility, sacrifice and renunciation—are all synonyms if they are applied to and have as goal the realisation of Lord Radha Krishna—the Supreme Truth personified. They care not for the applause of the mob for they know that if they have transmitted the Truth to one single individual their mission in life is completed and fulfilled. Saints understand when entering on the Path that "entombment precedes resurrection". The pros and cons of life are early understood by the saint. In his desire to grapple the unity, the Truth, Universalism—he shuts the doors of his senses against all sensual worldly objects. Poverty and tears he wooes for they construct a ladder to the throne of God. In luxury he sees the seeds of degeneration, and in a sheltered life a shackle to progress. The greatest opportunities in life he sees as disguised in tatters. He always sees room at the top of the ascent and cares not for the crowd at the bottom. He tramples unheedingly on the lures of the world and pursues with indefatigable zeal his path until the goal is reached.

The saint knows and works to find his eternally active divine centre—a search which necessitates withdrawal from the dead worldly circumference. Suffering hath made him vulnerable at every point. His greatest knowledge is a glimpse of the Timeless; and a burning thirst that can be quenched only by reaching the *gunatit* (quality-less) and *kalatit* (Timeless). His life is lived working out the great theme of Karma Yoga of the *Gita 'nistraigunbhava'rjuna'* 'rise above Time, space and body'. (II—45).

This concept of Time for the saint, which is synonymous in our terminology with the Timeless, defies expression and giving in passing a quotation or two from saints

I shall leave the reader to experience for himself this eternal Time in which the saint dwells and the eternal *lila* (Divine company and play) which he enjoys.

Says Meister Eckhart[11]—"There is a soul's day and God's day. Days here and all that have passed for 7,000 years, are as near God's day, today, as yesterday. Why? because time yonder is in the present now. The heavens revolve, hence time: day started when the heavens began to spin. Yonder the soul's day is passing in the present in her natural light, where all things are, where there is perfect day, God's day, day and night in one. Yonder in the day of Eternity the soul is in the essential now............... The soul's day and God's day are different. In her natural day the soul knows all things above time and place, nothing is far or near. And that is why I say, this day all things are of equal rank. To talk about the world as being made by God tomorrow, yesterday, would be talking nonsense. God makes the world and all things in the present, *Now.* Time gone a thousand years ago is now at present as near to God as this very instant."

The saint expresses this great realization in simple concise language: "It is time that makes us mortal. It is eternity that makes us immortal. If we live in the temporal we die. If we live in God, we live eternally. Body-consciousness is the womb of transmigration, and Atmic consciousness the Eternal abode of Divine beatitude."

The saint gives advice, and words of caution are uttered by him to the pilgrim on the Path. The wary soldier in pursuit of the Divine follows his enigmatic language as simply as he interprets the tear and the smiles of a child, but for the worldly-wise Pandit (scholar) the words defy interpretation. When those about him complained to Meister Eckhart, that no one could understand his sermons,

[11] *Meister Eckhart* p. 208.

He said, "to understand them three things are required. Ye must have conquered strife and be in contemplation of your Highest Good and be satisfied to do God's bidding and be a beginner with beginners and naught yourself and be so master of yourself as to be incapable of anger." In the prologue to the *Cloud of Unknowing,* the great Latin epitome of Christian mysticism of the 14th Century, the author says:

"In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost I beseech thee that my book should be read, heard and possessed only by him who with a true will and full intent is determined to be a perfect follower of Christ; and not only in active living but also in the sovereignest point of contemplative living, the which is possible by Grace to become in thy present life by a perfect soul abiding in this mortal body."[12] And he adds: "Fleshly janglers, open praisers and blamers of themselves or of others, tellers of trifles, tattlers and spinners of tales, and all manner of gossips: cared I never that they saw this book. For mine intent was never to write such a thing unto them, and therefore I would that they meddle not therewith, neither they nor any of these curious, lettered or unlettered men, yea, though they be full good men in active living, yet this matter accordeth nothing to them. But not so to those men, the which although they stand in activity by outward form of living, nevertheless yet by inward stirring under the privy spirit of God—whose dooms be hid—be full, graciously disposed; not continually as is proper to true contemplatives, but now and then, to be partakers in the highest point of this contemplative act. If such men might see it, they should by the grace of God be greatly comforted thereby."[13]

[12] *The Cloud of Unknowing*—Ed. by Dom Justin McCann—p. 1.
[13] *The Cloud of Unknowing*—Ed. by Underhill—p. 40, 41.

The saint's words are *shastras*—replete with esotericism, and unless our life is resolved to seek nothing but Truth—is aching to meet God face to face, has risen above intellect and mind—tools of *prakriti*—and yearns to dive deep into the unfathomable ocean of Eternity—we will be able to follow the saint's work with little profit to ourselves. Cardinal truths which they state in cryptic words must be understood. To state a few:—

"Ancient words are round and modern square"—Maxmuller.

"In created things is no Truth."

"Nature cannot transcend Nature."

"Grace caters for the spirit for it is of its nature."

"Die to the world to be born in the spirit."

"None goest to heaven but who has come from heaven."—(Bible).

"God longs as urgently for thee to go out of thyself in respect of thy creaturely nature as though all His felicity depended on it."—(Eckhart).

"He who hath once turned to the truth can never for an instance turn away therefrom."

"Who loveth aught but Me, who cleaveth to father, mother or other things, he is not worthy of Me. I come not upon earth to bring peace but a sword, to cut away all things, to part thee from brother, child, mother and friends, who are really thy foes."—(Christ).

"For verily thy comforts are thy foes. Doth thine eye see all things and thine ear hear all things and thy heart remember them all, then in these things thy soul is destroyed."—(Eckhart).

"Sink into oblivion and ignorance—NOT-SELF—for in silence is the Word heard."

"The contemplative Mary's choice is best, O active Martha and your life is merely useful", said Christ. "Our bliss does not consist in being active but passive, contemplative, and God-receptive."

"If anyone come after me, let him deny himself and take up his Cross and follow me."—(Bible).

"That man alone is righteous who has set at nought all created things, and stands facing straight along the unswerving line into the eternal *Word* where *in the right* he is idealised and transformed. Transcend virtue; and pass into its fruit—Love. You must let virtue go if you are to see God, face to face. When a man's mind

has lost touch with everything then, not till then, it comes into touch with God........serving the world and creature he is bondman of sin."—(Eckhart).

"Whoso would see God must outrun all things. What does it indicate when a man does not hasten past things? It shows he hath not tasted God. If he had tasted God he would hasten to pass by all things and not pass by merely, but break through all creatures.. Leaving all creatures—out and in me—I found God. When I did not rest in anything inferior to God I found Him........If I keep a penny for the morrow I am traitor and murderer to God."—(Eckhart).

"Whatever thou lovest that thou become must.
God if thou lovest God, dust if thou lovest dust."—(Scheffer).

"Aspire and you will be inspired."

"None of the best brain work in literature or science is ever paid for. What did Homer get for the Iliad and Dante for his masterpiece—only bitter bread and salt. The discoverer of the telescope earned a dungeon and the discoverer of the microscope died of starvation. Milton was paid £5 for Paradise Lost. He asked for bread and got a stone."—(*In the Woods of God Realisation* Vol. IV—p. 133).

"Truth never cares for majorities, and the majority of one age may be the wonder or shame of another."

"Remember who desires to save his life must give it up. Every truth won for man takes the life of a man."

"Talk not over the head of your audience. If you make them walk too fast they will stumble and fall and consequently curse you and abandon you."

"Let me dare to be divine since God has desired to be human."

"The greatest goodness of God is that He became man (Avatar)."

"Let me rather die for Truth than live for illusory world."

"Your personality may be exalted by rich people but Truth will be advanced through poor people."

"Let hearts meet and beat."

"Woe unto you when all men speak well of you, for so did their forefathers to false prophets. God's laws are no respecters of personalities."

"God would walk with anyone, if one would walk alone."

In these excerpts I have offered to my readers a few hints on this book on saints. I seek to create a hope in every one by repeating the great truth "there is always room at the top; the world turns aside to a man who knows whither he is going." This book exhorts the

reader to intense activity which is synonymous with recollection of God at all times and urges forward to martyrdom, those seeking to discover the Truth. The pilgrim must beware of forming or joining organizations, which are born when one feels his upward spiritual climb blockaded. They are indices of a lull in the pursuit of Truth. All these are mere stunts in pursuit of the Path. Because one dares not to rise higher in spirituality, he spreads his influence and miscalls it humanitarian work. He must remember that the greatest good the saint does to humanity is merely to live his life. It does not matter when you start the march in the Path: all that matters is that it must be of single purpose and the whole man in you must be wedded to it. A perfect surrender to and trust in the Lotus Feet of the Lord is all that matters. Fear not the ape or tiger within. It shall be tamed by your firm decision to live in God. Nor should you care if you are old in age. Sophocles began at 60 and recited his experiences at 80. Plato ceased labour at 80. Socrates drank poison at 70. Newton worked with zeal at 85. Goethe sought "more light" at 83. Humbolt performed his gigantic work at 90 and Irving his at 77. If you start now and here and live thus to the last breath of your life, believe me, if God *alone* is your goal—you shall find Him and meet Radha Krishna face to face in this life as He met those whose sketches find place in this volume.

The present work is divided into two volumes, each divided into two parts. In this first volume I have given short sketches of 13 saints of India. As all the saints treated by me have expressed themselves in poems, I have styled this work "MINSTRELS OF GOD." The saints dealt here are the Braj-Gopikas, Sri Mira, Sri Andal, Sri Bilwamangal, Sri Jaideo, Sri Surdas, Sri Chandidas, Sri Vidyapati, Sri Narsi Mehta, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Tukaram, Sri Tulsidas and a contemporary saint. In this first book I have portrayed the great message—by total surrender to

Lord Radha Krishna, through *kirtan* (singing of His exploits) you can gain *Saguna Sakshatkar* (self-realisation) and cross over the ocean of metempsychosis.

The second volume will also be subdivided into two parts. In Part I of the second volume, which will follow shortly, I shall deal with Baba Farid, Sarmad, Bullah Shah, Shah Latif and Nazir—the Indian Sufi saints who, transcending *Tauhid* (experience of One-ness), obtained a vision of the Divine Beloved as a distinct Person, Being; through repetition of the Name (WORD), practising great austerities, singing praises of the Lord in *satsang* (company of saints) and by adopting the course of *Fana-Fil-Allah* (living in perfect resignation to the Divine Will).

In Part II of the second volume I shall deal with saints of the *Nirguna, Advaita* or *Yogic* modes of worship. They are, Sri Shankaracharya, the great propounder of *Mayavada;* Nanak; Kabir; Gyaneshwar; Namdeo and Ramdas. Some of them of course combined the *Saguna* and *Nirguna* forms of worship while others leaned towards yoga and *Nirakar* form of Divine or *Atmic* realisation. That all these are realised souls, none can doubt. The nature of realisation of these emancipated souls was of course according to their *ananya nishta*—firm conviction. It will be observed that the saints selected in this volume and in the second are from all parts of India—from the Punjab, Sindh, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Maharastra, Gujarat (Bombay) and South India.

Their words are pregnant with meaning yet replete with esotericism. However hard I tried to bring out fully their *upadesh* and infallible message in the English translation, I was not fully satisfied until I had carefully perused the original texts of poems and placed them in this book as Appendix. The original texts are in Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi and Punjabi languages. I have transliterated all these original

texts (which appear in the Appendix) in the *lingua franca* of India—Hindusthani-Devanagri, *i.e.,* Hindi script. This will help English speaking scholars to have access in one place to all originals provided they are conversant with Hindi. In addition they will be able at least to enjoy the music and rhythm of the words the sound of which is bound to awaken sleeping consciousness in them if properly chanted.

My research and *satsang* have brought me to the firm conviction that these saints lived to show the shortest path to God-realisation—which alone can eradicate individual suffering and of the world and lead to eternal bliss. This path in this *Kali* (Iron) Age—is simple—namely, the singing of the Name and praises of the Lord in the company of saints. It is commonly styled *Sankirtan.*

My work will be completed if the Truth that runs through these pages is realised by even one reader.

The appendix at the end contains the original texts of the poems and *shlokas* which are numbered to facilitate reference.

A Bibliography is also appended so that with its help students may pursue further researches on the subject of their choice.

The 13 sketches in this work are of the poet-saints who worshipped the Lord in His *Saguna* form endowed with innumerable divine qualities. He was incarnate in one age as Sri Rama, in another as Sri Krishna and so on. The underlying mystery of incarnation which is equally appreciated by the East and the West is depicted in His *lilas* (divine plays). As to the motive of incarnation, the East in terms of Sri Sukdeo in the *Bhagwat* says:

> *"Anugrahaya bhūtanam manuṣim dēham asritah*
> *Bhajate drisi krida ya ṣrutva tatparo bhavet."*

i.e. the Lord incarnated out of mercy in the human form merely to perform such deeds, whereby man shall be impelled to the life of devotion and work out his realisation with zest."

(X—33-37)

The mystic of the West says:—

"He became man that we might be made God."

—(St. Athanasius)

and Meister Eckhart adds:—

"Our Lord says to every living soul, 'I became man for you, if you do not become God for me you do me wrong.'"

1—BRAJ-GOPIS

The first sketch deals with the Braj-Gopis. Admittedly they are an ideal to be emulated in the Path of Devotion by keeping in view the fact that the Gopis are born and not made and that the purpose of their incarnation like that of the Lord is to spread His cult of *Bhakti*. They have no Karmic body. They live ever hand in hand with the Lord. Not till the dust of their feet is placed with respect on our heads can we be imbued by Divine Love—*Parabhakti*. Their life amidst us—if we are fortunate to comprehend the fact—is one long succession of tears and sorrow. They preach the Gospel "Surrender to Lord as the only way to Him."

2—MIRABAI

The next sketch deals with my *Gurudevji*—Sri Miraji—once the queen of Chitor, but more remembered as a beggar who lived and pined for her Lord Girdhar. She sang amidst saints in Chitor, Braja and Dwaraka in the local dialects of those places and finally in the sight of the devotees bodily disappeared in the Image of Lord Krishna as Ranchorji, in Dwaraka. That she was a veritable Gopi,

she proved to the world by the manner she lived. In her life no sacrifice or renunciation of relationship or wealth for the love of Lord was too great. She fought against all ceremonials and formal religion, and wooed her Girdhar unmindful of all persecutions. Her dogged determination, love of saints, renunciation, fearlessness and surrender to Girdhar is apparent in every song she sang.

3—ANDAL

Then comes the sketch of the South Indian Rangnayaka Sri Andal or Godaji, worshipped all over India as the incarnation of Sri Laxmiji, the Divine Consort of Lord Sri Rangnath (Sri Ramji). Her life is like Miraji's—one long-drawn wail—her inspiration she draws from the *Krishnalila* performed by the Lord in Braja—her suffering ended when ultimately she was married to the Lord before the eyes of the world. To all it seemed a marriage with His image but when she disappeared on that occasion to dwell eternally with Her Lord in Sri Saket (*Vaikuntha Dham*) the people recognized that she was Sri Laxmi Herself.

4—JAIDEO

Jaideo is a memorable name in Sanskrit literature and his *Gita-Govinda* which sings of the *Basant Ras* (the Spring Dalliance scene) is known all over India and has been translated into European languages. Readers are familiar with the English translation by Sir Edwin Arnold as the "Lord's Song". It is erotic in style and a Roman Catholic spirit is needed to understand the wooing by the Lord of His eternal bride—*JIVA* (Soul)—into a spiritual marriage.

5—BILWAMANGAL

Next we come to the author of *Krishna Karnamrita*—Saint Bilwamangal.

The superb trait in Bilwamangal is that which depicts the cream of *Saguna* (with Form) worship of Lord Krishna, and the climax of *bhav* (feeling), known as *Braj bhav,* is shown at the outset when Sri Krishna once holding Bilwamangal by the arm later tears Himself away and eludes his grasp. Then follow the memorable words of the great saint and poet:—

"What bravado in thus wrenching off Thine hands from my grasp? Deservedly shalt Thou be praised if Ye can slip off my heart."

The Western mind can find a parallel to it in the song of Solomon. After the preliminary experience "All is vanity, all is vanity, all is vanity" the words irresistibly express themselves in the highest experience of love—"I am of the Beloved and the Beloved is mine". This is the cream of *Saguna Krishna Upasna* (worship). Such sentiments were well understood by the Jews and find expression in their folklore—for example in their talk with the Rabbi:—

"If Thou O Lord! wert a man experiencing human suffering, Thou wouldst be more gentle in Thy treatment".

"God took from me 10,000 roubles, and then my wife. How unjust and unreasonable! One would not have expected such a deed of God; much rather He should have first taken my wife, the 10,000 roubles afterwards; for then I had got me a new wife with another 10,000 roubles as dowry, so that each of us, both God and I, had a wife and 10,000 roubles!"

"Why do you persist in believing in a 'God of Vengeance?' Why not accept our God of Love?"

"When after death a Jew was questioned by God, 'Hast thou been honest in thy deeds?' he answered, 'And Thou O Lord! hast Thou been honest? Only the Jews who adore Thee go through life in poverty, whereas the

Christians who assign to Thee a wife and son, enjoy wealth and luxury! Why didst Thou not care for my welfare as Thou didst promise? I should like to see what would be Thy course, if Thou wert in reality burdened with a wife and children, and had a God who cared for thee as Thou carest for me".

(Immanuel Olsvanger's lecture Vide *Aryan Path*—1952 p. 478.)

It is not boldness but a firm faith and the impulse of love that find expression through the devotee's lips. It is the heart that cherishes the lotus feet of the Lord not merely as a servant does his Lord and master seated in audience, but as brother feels for brother, as a husband deals with his wife and as a son with his father. In this *bhav* (relationship) which is characteristic of the love of the Gopis, of Mira, Jaideo, Bilwamangal and others, God is not far off, far above us, but hand in hand with us, as our friend, brother, father.

The glory of this intimate relationship is well expressed by the above-quoted author when he says "The Rabbis in their holy communion with God arrived at the idea of the 'Brotherhood of God' a concept far transcending the Francis of Assisi's creed of the 'Brotherhood of Nature'" (*Ibid.* p. 479).

Another glorious feature of this worship is displayed when the Lord plays the veritable samaritan—reclaiming those who are deep in the slough. His reclamation of the Magdalenes is illustrative and emphatic proof of His assertion as is made by Krishna in *Gita* (IX—30) :—

"api chet sudurāchāro bhajatemām ananyabhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ."

i.e. Howsoever great his sins of the past, whosoever turns his face away for ever from the world and surrenders to Me—he is veritably turned a saint. And in Sri Rama avatar He says :—

> "If once one says, 'Sri Rama, I surrender to Thee,' I forgive all his past sins and own him as my son for ever".

Such a benevolent quality in the Lord, instils great hope in the sinners. The lives of Baramukhi and Ganika shine like beacon lights to the treader of the Path: unless one knows however about these Indian Magdalenes one cannot fully follow the mystery and majesty of *Saguna* worship and therefore I will simply narrate about them. Ganika—Baramukhi—Ramjani and Kanohpatra—great names—memorable names—are written for all times in the archives of the Temple of Love—preaching to the world the eternal heritage of repentant sinners and spreading the message of tears—not colourless tears, but red, as if the heart were melting in agony at the remembrance of the ugly past.

Sinners they—but believers in the mercy of the Lord—"that droppeth like the rain", that quenches the parched throats of the despised outcastes of society—with downcast eyes feebly uttering, "The lap of the Lord Radha Krishna is reserved for the poor—till Eternity." If witness to the Truth is needed, refer to the Puranas—the *Bhagwat*—where the Ganika disappointed by the non-return of her paramour gained instead Illumination—of which the very Buddha would be proud. Let us in recapitulating her words enjoy the beauty of this happening.

> "Observe my folly in that from the sensual beings I expect happiness!, my ignorance that He who is eager to confer on me eternal joy—the consort of the Goddess Laxmi—dwells close to my heart—breathes in my very breath—the Omnipotent One I ignore, and go in for fleeting joys at the hands of them who are a prey to Time. Today I have realised that He is my Dear Beloved One, Companion, Lord of my body and my soul—I offer to Him my all and

in return I am sure of dwelling in Eternal Beatitude with Him for ever and ever."[14]

As we pass through the gallery we notice Baramukhi, a veritable Magdalene—the Queen of Beauty of South India—proceeding to offer up a crown in the Sacred Temple of Sri Ranganatha and the Lord unable to resist the temptation to don it at the devotee's hands extending His neck to reach her as she stands rooted at the door having suddenly become unholy due to a menstrual attack.

Onward we go—there stands Sri Ramjani singing Krishnadas's beautiful song:—

"My heart is entangled in the net
spread by the Beauty of Lord Girdhar.
His captivating gait, rapturous mood,
beautiful chin have made their abode in my heart.
His complexion—like the azure, water-laden cloud,
Has drowned my gaze in its waters.
I offer my heart and soul for ever to Him,
Throwing before the world this lifeless corpse.

(For Text, Appendix—Item No. 2)

Ere the last line was uttered—amidst the sweet tingle of the trinkets—there rushes forward the favourite of Vallabhacharya, the Cynosure of Vittalnath! Sri Bhagwan Govardannathji! And embracing her He disappears with her soul—leaving her corpse in the Temple.

[14]ahō mē mōhavitatim pasyatā viditātmanah
yā kāntād asataḥ kāmam kāmayē yēna baliśā
santam samīpē ramaṇam ratipradam
vittapradam nityamimam vihāya
akāmadam dukhabhayādhiśōka—
mōhapradam tuchhamaham bhajē jñā.
suhṛit prēshṭhatamō nāthaḥ atmāchāyam śarīriṇām
tam vikrīyātmanaivaham ramē a nēna yathā ramā.

(*Bhagwat* XI—8—30, 31, 35)

But by far the sweetest is the incident in the life of Kanohpatra whom Adil Sah the king of Bedar wished to place in his harem. He failed in his ignoble purpose and I will tell you the reason:

The scene is laid in the room of an elderly courtesan named Shyama in a small town, Mangabberta in South India. It is night and music is going on. In the midst of the unholy gaiety, the beautiful only child of Shyama—Kanha by name—a girl of 15—suddenly makes a sign—and stops playing the tabla. "It is striking me like a stone, and the guitar pierces me like the scorpion-bite, I cannot tolerate this gay company of the debauchees any longer." Saying thus she fainted away. Days passed heavily until one day the following conversation took place between the mother and the daughter:—

Shyama: My Child! The stomach must be fed and the body clothed. Therefore smother thy noble thoughts of *bhakti,* drink the sour cup of humiliation, and drown the pearl of thy pure soul in the quagmire of sensuality—our birth, the fruit of our past karmas—demands it—there is no escape—you must sell yourself.

Child Kanha: (putting her hand to her mother's lips) No more of it dear! I spit on such ugly sensual life. I will have none of it. I am determined to lead a pure life for ever and ever. In place of food there will be fasting and cast-off rags for raiment; such will be my life henceforth. For the sake of tinsel silver and gold coins I will not drink the poison of sensuality and prepare for hell. I shall prefer death rather than this sort of ugly life......

The rift now grew into a gulf—Kanha a devotee of Krishna's love was turned out bare-footed in shreds and with only a small idol of Girdhar Nagar. So she departs

from the house on her pilgrimage of love but her beauty, a veritable impediment in the Path, dogs her—for soon the soldiers of the King of Bedar demand of her that she follow them to their king, and angered by her refusal, they coerce. The General decides that such a rebellious girl must be taken along in fetters, but upon her entreaties, he permits her to visit the Temple of Pandurang on the way.

Ah! what a blessed meeting! for, as she prays, her words and entreaties meet with the Lord's approval:—

"Father! Long have I known that sensual pleasure is the bane of life. Indra suffered perforations all over the body, Bhasmasura was reduced to ashes, the moon bears a spot on its body, and Ravana lost his life—all these suffered for having given themselves up to carnal pleasure. I left my mother to avoid the disgusting ugly life and here again the demons pursue me. O! Thou reliever of the outcastes! Save Thy afflicted Kanha, for she has taken the shelter of Thy Name—the garland which she wears at all times".

No sooner were the words uttered than an effulgent light surrounded Kanha standing amidst soldiers. A moment later her Atman was taken by the Lord and only her corpse was left in the world. Thus did Lord Pandarinath acknowledge her who had decided to woo Him in childhood and had stuck to her decision to the end though it cost her her life.

We will pass over Chintamani of whom we shall speak in connection with Bilwamangal. One more incident we will narrate here: that of Sri Swami Ramanujacharya's disciples, Hemangana and Dhanurdas which is self-explanatory:

[The occasion is memorable. The street is crowded to witness the Idol of Lord Rangnath as it passes by. This particular day Sri Ramanujacharya is amongst the spectators. Suddenly he is startled by a unique sight.

Dhanurdas the local millionaire is walking with his face towards the prostitute Hemangana over whom he holds an umbrella while his back is towards the Idol. Seeing this affront shown to the Lord, Ramanujacharya faced him with the question "What charm in this lady has attracted you so much that all sense of decency and decorum has left you?" Dhanurdas replied, "The beauty of her eyes". Ramanuja remonstrated saying "What if I show you better eyes than these!" Thereupon Dhanurdas replied, "Then it would of course be farewell for ever to the sensual enjoyment of this woman."

Then as the Idol stood before him, followed the heart-rending appeal of the great Acharya to Lord Ranganathaji :—

"Father! Thy mercy is reserved for sinners. We err and You forgive—that is Thy *swabhav* (nature). Here is a *jiva* (soul) who will revert to a pious life if the glances that bewitched Sri Sita and stole the heart of the Gopis be but once cast on this young man! I offer the fruit of all my penances—if they are worth anything—to secure this boon of Thee." The Idol moved—the very Lord appeared and shot a glance. Dhanurdas, bewitched, sank into the arms of Sri Ramanuja and the lost soul was reclaimed!

It was the turn of Hemangana now. She came forward and addressed Sri Ramanuja, "Master, if sin draws the Lord's compassion, I am more entitled to His Grace than my paramour, whom I dragged into my net." Thus pleaded Hemangana with tear-bedimmed eyes. The compassion of the Swami made him make a second similar appeal and a second time followed the Lord's Grace; the Magdalene became the Great Saint, the favourite of the Vaishnavas.

As in the East so in the West—indeed all over the world—the sinners in their repentant moments have become the recipients of the greatest grace of the Lord

and the Saints. Thias of Alexandria, Ambapali of India and another reputed Magdalene of Syria all bear witness to this Truth.] We will close this topic (to which we shall return in the life of Bilwamangal who was reclaimed in this way) with the incident of the reclamation of Magdalene by Christ, to which scene Allison Peers refers as "Sovereign Exchange."

"There is glory in such a Christian attitude when the erstwhile sinner ill and wounded stands before Christ the healer. On the one side then place Christ wounded and bound, His head pierced by thorns, His face spat upon by men, and His body bearing marks of the lash and covered with blood from scourging, and with His divine eyes filled with tears. On the other side place the Magdalene wanton, profane, full of sins, notorious, nameless, an enticement of the devil, a snare to souls. Hear Pilate saying "Behold the man!" and turn to St. Luke who replies to him "Behold the woman!" Then consider the wondrous mystery which is there! That there may be a "Behold the woman!" there must be a "Behold the man!" For He has become Man by Divine Grace. Behold the woman; woman in the weakness of her nature. Behold the man—the just man. Behold the woman; a sinner. Behold the woman who sins. Behold the man who pays the price. Behold the woman condemned. Behold the man who bears the penalty. Behold the woman who merits the punishment. Behold the man who is scourged. Behold the woman free. Behold the man bound. This is the man who, being God, became man. This is the woman who, a sinner, became a saint. The man who dies that this woman may live. This woman who lives because this man has died. This man is brought before Pilate, by such as this woman who is brought by this man before the Father. Pilate delivers the man to man as his ransom, Christ presents the woman to the Father as a precious gift, a sovereign exchange!' (*Spanish mysticism* p. 119-120).

We have given here in brief the salient features of the conception of the Lord as the "redeemer of sinners"—instilling hope in even the direst and drowning people to the *Saguna* (Divinity with Form) form of worship of Lord Sri Radha Krishna.

The goal of the *Saguna* worshipper of Sri Radha Krishna is not to gain that sort of *mukti* or nirvana (salvation) wherein there is a cessation of all suffering coupled with the loss of individuality and the merging of the self as a drop into the ocean—(the Over-Self of supreme consciousness) but rather to attain to His Eternal Abode, which is self-effulgent and needs no *prakritic* Sun or Moon to illuminate it (*Gita* XV—6), which transcends Time, and where dwells Lord Krishna with His consort Sri Radha and His *Sakhas* and *Sakhis* (male and female companions) as His *parshads* (attendants). They are all emancipated souls, and when they incarnate in the world, are endowed with an individuality and personality, in qualities and powers well-nigh equal to Lord Krishna, and attended to by the Lord's *yogamaya* (own incomprehensible power) so as to serve Him as participants in His Divine *Lila*. Of this Eternal Abode of the Lord—the *Sastras* like the *Bramha Samhita,* and saints like Surdas, Mira Bai, Narsi and others all sing in their songs: The distinction between *Nirguna* (Formless) and *Saguna* (with Form) worship may be seen in the goal which each has set for itself—in the *Nirguna* form of worship the goal is the end of suffering of rebirth by dissolving the individual personality and is called *Mukti* or Nirvana; whilst the other form aims at transcending the realm of duality—or opposites that is, the world—and dwelling with the Lord in His Realm of Eternal Beatitude. The Lord speaks about these two goals in Ch. XII of the *Gita,* and also in the *Bhagwata* He says—

'Sāloka sāriṣta sārupa sāmepeykatvaṁapyut
Diyamanaṁ na gṛhanti matsevnaṁ jana.'

(III—29-13).

"My devotees do not care for Nirvana or *Mukti* but they desire after the death of the body to live with Me in My Eternal Abode and serve Me with their *daiva* (supernatural) body and soul." The concept of the *Saguna* worshipper therefore makes it possible, while living in this body, to woo Him by devotion and have His *Sakshatkar* (vision) here in this world and also makes it possible for him to establish contact with His Divine *parshads* (attendants) who are always touring in all realms (*lokas*) lower than Vaikuntha so as to help the devotees in their devotions and take them back Home.

Even Sankaracharya in spite of his *Advaitic* leanings had to accept the existence of this *Saguna*, the Eternal Abode of the Lord and to admit that those of his *Advaita* (*Nirguna*) followers who attained *mukti* in fact reached no other higher abode than that after emancipation. He says this in his commentary of the *Gita* IX—25;

> *"yānti madyājino madyajanaśīlā Vaishnavā māmeva. Samanāy apyayse māmevā na bhajante ajānatte alpaphalabhājo bhavante itiarthah."*

For this reason he is personally[15] interested in the *Saguna* worship of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Reality, although advocating and preaching *Advaita*.

6—SURDAS

As to the Path indicated for the *Saguna* worshipper one may with profit study Surdas (our next sketch) alongside with Bilwamangal. Bilwamangal in his *Krishnakarnamrita* says:

> "If perchance my devotion for Thee, O! You of Divine resplendent Form, becomes unshakable Nirvana waits my pleasure. (Verse 17):

[15]Vide Sankaracharya's *Prabodh Sudhakar*.

"Good-bye to all formal worship—of *Devas, pitrus* etc. I contemplate Krishna, King of Yadavas...... (Verse 13):

"That *sadhana* is enough for me. I need no expiation of sins.

"Let Atman worshippers seek Him in *samadhi*, I delight in singing the exploits of Krishna...... (Verse 26).

Says Surdas: "Udhava! repeat not the painful message of witnessing in *samadhi* the Formless Lord of Yoga —We would better die than change our faith and love for Krishna of Form Resplendent." (Verse 17)[16]

In the Path of *Saguna* worship of the Lord emphasis is laid by Surdas on wooing Him by tears as the most efficacious way. Moreover he insists on total surrender (vide *Gita* XII-6 and II-61) as the sole way to attain Him. It will be seen that emphasis is laid on *ananyata* (one-pointed unswerving devotion and worship) *i.e.* take only one human Form of the Lord, say Sri Krishna—and sing only the exploits performed when He incarnated in that aspect, live only in His *dham* Brindavan, dwell only on His name Krishna and His qualities and then an intense yearning will develop in you, and He immediately become the goal of your life (vide *Gita* XI-5). Emphasis is laid on Love—as against formal religion—and on the "heart rather than the head". In the words of the Christian mystic "by Love He may be gotten and holden, but by thought of

[16]For Originals of these verses refer to these verses of Bilwamangal and Surdas in Appendix.

understanding, never."[17] That the heart has both a transcendental head and an all-seeing eye is well put by Maulana Jelaluddin Rumi who says:

"yin hakikat rā shuno az goshey dil."

(*Masnavi*—Book I)

echoing *Gita's* XIII-13—"*Sarvatah pāṇipādam*......" *i.e.* the emancipated soul has eyes and ears all round; and let me add, more so when it is established in Love and Faith.

Surdas is admittedly the best among the Hindi poets of the past and the present. Of course Mira defies comparison, her place being unique and her realisation unparalleled, for she was herself a Gopi while Surdas sought the dust of the feet of Gopis. The supremacy of Surdas is due to his experiences and his renunciation of all for the transcendental, turning his eyes completely from the creation and its creatures and establishing himself in poverty. There is a fragrance in all he says and an impress of divine grace in his expression which is wanting in the Hindi poets of the past and the present who are generally wedded to the worship of mammon. Above all he had *darshan* of Lord Krishna which many of these poets neither claim nor had. The difference is in that he was saint first and poet after. He sang by compulsion and could not but express the fire of longing for Lord Krishna that consumed him. Today the majority of the poets are but poets and little deserve or desire to be saints at all. My definition of a saint must be apprehended by the perusal of this whole volume, but in a word, a saint is one who has seen God (Namdeo), is always hand in hand with Him, attaining this goal by turning his eyes from creature and creation towards the creator exclusively.

[17] *Cloud of Unknowing*—Chap. VI.

7—NARSI MEHTA

Next we come to Narsi Mehta. Judge Javeri says of him in his *Milestones of Gujarati Literature*:—(p. 67).

> "Narsi and Mirabai both quarrelled with their nearest and dearest in devoting themselves to Krishna and each was *rewarded with the beatific vision* the description of which they have sung in numbers, which still appeal to the hearts of men and women of Gujarat."

Narsi is certainly the pioneer amongst the Gujarati poets and the first and best in singing of the Love of Radha Krishna and in enriching Gujarati literature thereby. His devotion made him extremely popular. His sentiments are superb, and his faith in Lord Krishna is clearly noticeable at every stage of his life. Like the other saints *kirtan* is the pathway to realization of which Narsi sings and he insists upon the repetition of the Name of Krishna—for he says :—

> "The Name and the Lord are one—in their efficacy no difference exists between the two. Repeat it and believe Narsi, easily ye shall become an heir to His *Vaikuntha* and reach His lotus feet. (Verse 1)
>
> "Leave vanity and company of the worldly, *Bhakti* is the essence and the root, the world and its riches are like unto husk. All ye see is ephemeral and like shadows passes away. (Verse 3)."

Narsi's faith was remarkable and he tested it by asking the Lord to appear and many miracles followed this trial. But above all shone his humility. He proved to all that *kirtan* is able to achieve all and woo our Lord Krishna.

Narsi is considered to be the incarnation of Raja Muchukunda of former birth, reborn to propagate the message of *Bhakti* of Sri Krishna (Vide *Bhagwat* X—51).

Narsi insisted on renunciation, lived it and preached it as the gateway to illumination. And here as proof of his statements he quotes from the *Puranas*:—

> "He who obstructs thee in *kirtan*, renounce him.... ....be it your father, mother, wife or son.....................So did Prahlad, ... Bharat .... Brahman's wives and the Gopis........and attained to the height of devotion.......This is the secret path (Verse 4)."[18]

He is a genius, a poet and above all a saint who will live for ever.

8—CHANDIDAS

The Bengali language is immortalised by the great Chandidas—whose *Radha-Krishna-lila* songs were cherished by Sri Chaitanya as a veritable Kohinoor in his heart. Chandidas came into prominence—as a result of his contact with Rami—who is to him as Beatrice was to Dante—the gateway to illumination. She guided him through the labyrinthine maze and took him up to the heights of illumination. He considered her the incarnation of the Lord's consort—Sri Radha. There was an astounding manifestation of pure love between the two which fleshly eyes can never hope to witness or interpret. Chandidas became famous in his life-time. There is such melody in his poems that no Bengali Vaishnava would cheerfully complete his worship without singing one of Chandidas' songs.

9—VIDYAPATI

The names of Chandidas and Vidyapati go together in the literature of Vaishnavas. The Maithili court poet Vidyapati had superb spiritual experiences and his *Radha-*

[18]For text of these verses of Narsi see Appendix.

Krishna-lila songs—patronised by the ruler Raja Siva Singh and his queen Rani Laxmidevi created a craze throughout his capital and *Krishna Lila* came to be enacted in hundreds of houses. His pure life added to the sublimity of his name and fame. His poems are gems of Vaishnava poetry. Very little is known about his life.

10—CHAITANYA

Both the Bengali poet-saints Chandidas and Vidyapati, who wrote in the local vernacular and Bilwamangal and Jaideo who composed in Sanskrit and sang *Krishna-lila* were favoured by Sri Chaitanya, who is responsible for reviving once again—after some hundred years—love for Sri *Radha-Krishna-lila* and lore. Sri Chaitanya who was a great devotee of Sri Krishna, took up *sannyasa* at the age of 27 and led a strict and austere life, leaving his wife and mother. After journeying about the country and promulgating the message of Krishna *kirtan,* he settled down at Puri where he spent over twelve years enjoying with choice companions like Sri Rai Ramanand Rai and others, the reading of the exploits of Sri Krishna as narrated in the *Bhagwat.* His message was simple and consisted of eight *shlokas*—known as *Shiksha-Ashtak* wherein he laid down that salvation in this Iron (*Kali*) Age lay through *Sankirtan* which, he emphasised, should be performed with due humility, intense yearning and perfect renunciation of all worldly attachments. In addition this *kirtan* must be only of the Supreme Deity—Sri Radha Krishna. Very great was the effect of his message and credit goes to him for having produced such rare devotees as Sri Raghunath Das, Sri Rup, Sri Santan and Sri Haridas—whose lives are fragrant with devotion and glittering with renunciation.

However, with the passage of time and through the overzeal of his followers his simple glowing message has been metamorphosed by the introduction of *parikiya bhav*[19] and *anugata upasna*[20]. The most painful, indeed tragic, feature is the serious attempt to exclude the *upasna* of Sri Krishna, putting in His place as the deity, Sri Chaitanya. This is a thing which Chaitanya would never have countenanced had he been amongst us.

Sri Chaitanya preached the worship of Krishna and considered himself His *dasa*. He preached realisation of *Goloka*, through the *sankirtan* of Sri Krishna's name insisting on the life of a recluse and *paramhamsa* by dwelling in the wilderness of Braja. Alas! today he is being made a God, his name is being substituted for Krishna in *kirtan*, his birth place Nawdvip praised in preference to Brindavan. All this is being done by putting strained interpretation (vide Jiva Goswamiji's commentary on it) on verses like that of *Srimad Bhagawat* (sk. XI—ADH. 5—sh. 32) which run:

[19]*Parikiya Bhav*. This suggests that—although Sri Radha and Krishna are consorts eternally dwelling as such in *Goloka*, yet on incarnation in the world they perform their *lilas* like human beings playing the part of paramours, it being made possible through the services of *yogamaya*, the personal supernatural power of the Lord incarnated as Sri Paurnmasi in Brindaban.

[20]*Anugata* form of worship:—Herein the initiates, considering themselves as endowed with supernatural female bodies contemplate as *sakhis* (female companions) of Sri Radha, with ambition to serve Her when, on leaving their bodies they reach Her *Goloka Dham*. It is believed that direct contact with Krishna and *sakhi* (initiate) is never possible. The *sakhi*—who worships under her guru drawn from *parampara* from the first 8 eternal *sakhis* of the Lord gets only the joy of the Union of Sri Radha Krishna that comes filtering through from Sri Radha through the main *sakhis* of Sri Radha who are contemplating on Her, through their lesser *sakhis* styled *Manjuris* who contemplate on them, through their guru who contemplates on *sakhi* next in order to the initiate established in supernatural body and serving with the guru by her side.

> *"Krishṇa varṇam twisa Krishña sāngopangastra-pārshadam*
>
> *yajyēh sankirtanprayer yajanti hi sumedhsā"*

and by ignoring the *Bhagavad Gita* and relevant Vedic *shastras.* It is high time that the spirit of Chaitanya—the great evangelist of Sri Krishna *kirtan*—was understood and followed and that his insistence on Shridhar Swami's commentary on *Bhagwat* was observed. Sri Chaitanya while applauding the ideal love of the Gopis, gave warning against the romantic relations between the sexes miscalled Love. "True Love," he said, "will dawn only when hearts have risen above sexual cravings." His hard dealing with younger Haridas—because he, a sannyasin, conversed with an old lady devotee—should never be forgotten by Chaitanyites. Besides, Chaitanya insisted on the Vedic life as enjoined in the *shastras,* and not a self-made rule to guide life. We should note his words of reprimand to a pandit, who put a constrained interpretation on the texts of the Upanishads: "Sir! since you wish me to speak I must confess that the texts are quite clear to me but your explanations have clouded their meaning. You avoid the direct meaning of the texts and provide those which do not to my mind represent the real spirit of the sacred books." If this warning by Chaitanya were kept in view, liberality and catholicity will take place of contorted vision and exclusivism amongst his followers.

11—TUKARAM

We come now to Tukaram, who like Mira and Chaitanya, left no body in the world and attained the Divine Abode of Sri Krishna with this physical body illumined, proving as they did that he was *parshad* of the Lord; incarnated to spread the message of *Bhakti,* living in penury but looking askance at riches and association with the rich. Tukaram decried the *Advaita* ideal of "identification with Brahma" as also the *nirakar* (formless worship) goal of "absorption".

Often would he repeat: "He who says that he has become God is a fool and will surely go to hell. O Lord! I do not want self-identity, I want the service of Thy feet." So deep and full of experience and so girt with firm faith was his devotion to Sri Krishna that he refused to accept any other Bramha and Lord of the Universe than the one who stood idolised at Pandharpur on a brick-pedestal. His kinship with Him was very real and with the world he had—even in his household—no relationship. His quarrels with his Lord when denied the beatific vision, depict the limits of passion as he cries out in despair and agony "Art Thou dead O Krishna that Thou heedeth me not!"

Tukaram was a great missionary, who in his own words, "rubbed himself down, like sandal into a paste and bore the heat of the process of rubbing so as to impart coolness to the people." His method of preaching was through *abhangas* (poems). He was believed by many to be an incarnation of Namdeo, and well did he voice the spirit and feelings of the latter. The assurance of his message was remarkable as is shown by his words:

> "Come here, come here, great and small, women and men......I shall carry all of you to the other shore. I come as the sole bearer of the Seal of God to carry you over in God's Name."

He proved his exhortations in his life. Fearlessly he would express great truths and very boldly said: "He who says that he could accomplish the worldly and spiritual life together will accomplish neither. Between two stones he would only fall to the ground. He will only be ruined on both sides and will ultimately go to hell."

Our obeisances to such a true and great saint.

12—TULSIDAS

Tulsidas—the great lyric poet—the singer of the immortal *Ramayana* in the Hindi language is revered as the incarnation of Sri Valmiki Rishi. A beautiful incident about his rebirth is found in ancient works to the following effect:

> "Once in yore, Sri Hanumanji wrote in Sanskrit a great poetical work praising the exploits of Sri Rama and went to get Valmikiji's opinion on it. The latter fearing its excellence would soon make it more popular than his own *Ramayana* in Sanskrit verse, said 'It is too noble, sacred and beyond the comprehension of the ordinary intellect. Would it not fall flat into the hands of commoners.......' Thereupon a little annoyed, Sri Hanumanji threw the great work into the sea and said 'Valmiki! I follow the working of your mind, I place on you a curse—that you be reborn in the *Kali* Age!' When Valmiki apologising entreated him to lift it, the latter added, 'thus reborn you shall compile in the prevalent dialect a *Ramayana* at the instance of Sri Shiva and under my guidance, which shall outshine your Sanskrit work and shall get thee immortal fame'".

Thus it happened. Tulsidas is a prolific writer and he will live for ever as a poet and singer of the divine exploits of Sri Rama. His *ananya* (unswerving) devotion to the Sri Sita Rama form of the Lord is remarkable and unparalleled, as is his love of the Name of the Lord, faith in the *kirtan* of the Lord's exploits, in *Sharnagati* and in His Grace. He lived for 125 years and was a contemporary of Kabir, Mira, Raidas and others.

The Gospel of Tulsidas is briefly given in his couplets thus:

"A man can never gain peace even in dream if he is faithless to Him.

"And so long as he does not remember and worship Lord Rama with unswerving devotion he will not attain eternal joy and bliss.

"To dive into the ocean of the Lord's radiance, and drink deep of His beauty as does the fish, to hear discourses upon His exploits, to chant His sweet Name and to be filled with Love and surrender to Him and to seek His solitary refuge, this, says Tulsidas is the essence of all *shastras* that he has known that it is the only way to gain life's goal—realisation." (For text—vide appendix No. 3.)

13—THE LITTLE-KNOWN SAINT OF BRINDABAN

The last sketch deals with a contemporary. In the case of this saint it is enough to see the truth of the saying, which runs:

"The world knows least of its greatest men.
Saints of Braja write their names on running water."

Also herein we see delineated the significance of the mystical biblical saying:

"True, the Path to Realisation cannot be trod without a *Satguru* and only a *Satguru* from the Divine Abode matters in the spiritual life."

Finally I take this opportunity to thank Sri Sri Mata Krishnaji, the well-known Saint of Brindaban for guidance, and to express my gratitude to the authors and publishers of the works shown in the Bibliography and referred to in this work. I am grateful to Sri K. M. Munshi, Governor of U.P., for suggesting the title of this work.

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BANKEY BEHARI.

Sri Mata Krishna Satsang,
Sri Brindaban,
New Year's Day 1956.



THE GOPIS OF BRINDABAN Sketch: *R. Rawal*

CHAPTER I

THE GOPIS OF BRINDABAN

(*Circa*—3,000 B.C.)

"Why should a woman forfeit her whole heart
At bidding of a simple shepherd's call?"

—*Fiona Macleod.*

[ABOUT GOPIS OF BRAJ

"Bände Nänd Brajstrinām pādrenüm' bhikṣnṣā
Yāsām Harikathodgitaṁ punati bhuvantriyam."

I bow to the lotus feet of the Gopis of Braja, who revel in reciting Krishna's feats. (*Bhagwat*)

"Āsamahocharan renüjuṣāmhaṁ syam Brindabaney kimape gulmlatauṣdhināṁ,

yā dustyajam swajanam aryapathaṁ ce hitwā bhejer Mukand padviṁ srutibhirvimrgyam.

yā ve ṣriya architám jadibhirāpt kameryogeyṣvarepi yadatmani rāsgosṭyam,

kriṣnas tadbhagwataṣcharnārbindam nystam 'staneṣu vijho parirabh tāpam."

I worship the Gopis who in their infinite love for Sri Krishṇa renounced their all in the world, broke the unbreakable shackles of family life. I wish I were reborn in Brindaban as a plant so that the dust of their lotus feet may fall on my head and purify me. (Uddhava)

"Yathā Brajgopikānāṁ"

Verily it is indescribable—*Parabhakti,* the highest form of Devotion to Lord Krishna—it is seen manifest in the lives of the Gopis of Braja. (*Narada Bhakti Sutra*—21)

"At ava tadbhavadvallabhinam"

Parabhakti is, as practised by the Gopis. (*Sandilya Bhakti Sutra*—14)

"Dhanya Gokulkanya vayameh manyamahey jagati
yasām nain sarojay suranjano abhu Niranjanaḥ
sakṣāṭ"

All adulations to the Gopis! who hold the Lord in their eyes—verily as the black collyrium therein. (*Gopi Prema Amrit*)

"Nijāṇgamapi yā Gopiyā mameti sämupasitey
Tabhyam vina na më Partha nigrh prembhajnam."

The Gopis are really living to serve Me with all their body and soul. O Arjuna, I tell you, says Lord Krishna, the Gopis are more dear to me than all my devotees. (*Ibid.*)

"Nigamtaro pretisakham mrgitam militam na Param Bramḥ
Militaṃ militaṃ idānim Gopbadhütipatanchalendam."

He—the Brahman—whom ye have not yet discovered searching amidst every branch of the Vedas, I pray you repair to the Abode of the Gopis, there ye shall find Him lying in the laps of Yasoda hiding His face under her apron. (*Anon.*)]

THE GOPIS OF BRINDABAN AND THEIR MESSAGE OF LOVE

SHE STOOD in ascetic liveliness. I moved round her trying to recognise who she was—with her beautiful form, lovely gaze, and bathed in the shower of gold. A soft smile played on her lips. She beckoned with looks, and caressed with glances. Every one gathered about her, of all ages, of

both sexes, rich and poor. While she with fixed gaze looked unconcerned as if trying to delve deep and gather the flowers that grew in the soft recesses of the human heart. The breeze could be heard softly whispering, "she is unconquerable". Youth's stuff cannot burn her, nor the experience of age scorch her garments. I looked round. The rivers were flowing, their music like soft dirges, the mountain snows were glistening clear as silver, the birds were chirping as if in welcome. But there I was, my heart drinking deep of her beauty, and softly murmuring a lullaby to caress her aching eyes into a solemn reverie. Born in the midst of beauty, nurtured on the bedrock of renunciation, there, lo! her features changed. She melted away into a flame and then I knew who she was. It was Love.

It passed, but it left its impress. There in the distance someone was conversing with his heart, saying:

> "Love is the most perfect of all boons. Love is a fire, and like the fire when newly kindled consuming the wood, it is impure and full of smoke, but after when well alight it becomes purer, brighter, clearer and more refined, so is it with love, which in its beginnings is imperfect, defiled and earthly, but rises towards its rightful sphere, which is God, perfecting itself until it reaches Him by gaining quality until it arrives at a state of perfection."

And yet another in a far off land was singing:

> "O flame of living love
> That dost eternally
> Pierce through my soul with so consuming a heart
> Since there is no help from above
> Make thou an end of me
> And break the bond of thy encounter sweet.........
> O burn that burns to heal!
> O more than pleasant wound."

(*Spanish Mysticism*—E. A. Peers)

In our land we can still picture to ourselves the princess turned a beggar, singing to her Girdhar the sweet songs that have been handed down to posterity. Her loving sacrifice is fragrant with its beauty. She felt the joy. She knew the pangs of the cult of the *Bhakta*. How she gave warning, lest the unwary pilgrims get scorched, the fire is fierce, let no vain pretenders enter. Her faith was afire for love. A torch-bearer of love she unfurled the banner of devotion, and shouted the call of *Bhakti*.

It is sweet to hear of *Bhakti*. Sweeter still is it to work for *Bhakti*. Sweetest of all is it if one could become *Bhakti*.

It is this love—*Bhakti*—to which the mystic aspires. It opens the gateway that leads to the unexplored region, that has been attracting pilgrims for ages. They have made these journeys at great cost. Sometimes they had to give up life itself to secure permission to cross the threshold. Yet undeterred by such supreme sacrifices, with crosses of martyrdom lying stretched over centuries, new aspirants have fearlessly trod the path that leads to the land of bliss, to the realm of light. Working through life to achieve the goal, one has seen now and then, the flash of that light, that brilliant vision. But a mere description has captivated the hearts of many. Some contemplation of it has drawn many to it. They have heard with rapt attention the warning that the path is a razor edge, that out of a million aspirants one only may attain to the goal, yet they have pursued the path.

What has been the source of their inspiration? What has been sustaining them through life? Something besides the examples of the lives of the martyrs in the path, who have gone ahead of them. Something more than this has been the motive force, the inner urge that has guided their selfless lives namely the glimpses of Reality that have now and then been vouchsafed to them, in the course of their search

for Truth. Such signposts, such flashes are but natural in the life of a *Bhakta*. For *Bhakti* is nothing visionary. It is real. It is the life of experiences, that has been undergone at all hours, sought in nightlong vigils and bitter penances. Their penances have not been for their own sakes. They have served only as ladders whereby to climb the rugged rocks that beset the path of the sore-footed traveller that dared to tread it. The condemnation by the "rationalist" or the intellectual, that these are merely a visionary's hallucinations is far-fetched and baseless, in that the subject retains consciousness throughout those moments. His is no scheme for the weak-willed, but, by offering his will at the divine altar, he has merely sought a stronger will, a higher will, the incomparable will, which is rooted firm in the eternal. It is such that words fail him, when he attempts to portray his experiences, to describe the pain and anguish he has suffered, before the final enlightenment. The rationalist asserts that his broken half-words and his babbling—if not a tissue of lies—merely express the ravings of one, whose mind is unhinged. Such a critic however fails to realise the truth, or to hear of those things which have fallen to the lot of the mystic as the result of the boon of intuitive experience.

When the beatific vision comes who can withstand its brilliance? Moses swooned, Buddha watched in wonder and Arjuna was dumb-founded. To remain at that high pitch for long, as a result of that intuitive experience, is beyond the capacity of one in this mortal frame. The yogi who dares to dwell within this circle of enchantment is the product of more than one life. He has worked himself up to that stage of evolution. Today his soul can respond to this high note, this extraordinary pitch, with ease. You cannot pull him down, he who has drunk the nectar from these empyrean springs, and who dwells now in that state of spiritual union. Impelled by compassion and charity, he has come back to play the samaritan, his heart bubbling

with pity for the deluded and the fallen, the strayed and the misguided amongst us. The call of humanity has proved irresistible and he has responded to it, but not every such emancipated soul returns to work in the world.

Those who do return, do so to endure the pangs of separation and to offer themselves as sacrifices in His name to save humanity. They act as guides and show the way. In their lives they show the path by living it. They are the moths who have lost themselves in their love for the flame, for the fire. Their hearts are given to the brilliant light and they rush to it. They are dumb-founded. I have often heard the stories of the lives of these sublime souls, it is inspiring reading. And marvellous are the ideals they portray. Let us recite one—that of the Gopis—the heralds of the Message of Divine Love. The Gopis existed—let none doubt that. Even today you may come to Brindaban, sit by the side of the Jamuna and in the bowers watch the whispering breeze, in the distance watch the peacock strut and hear the sweet low of the cow; and in the cool shade be lulled by the wind as if by a lullaby into a brief reverie, and I promise you will have *darshan* (vision) of Him for whom the Gopis sacrificed themselves, and Who alone is worth our noblest aspiration. Many have made offerings on the Divine Altar—the lotus feet of Lord Krishna—but unique amongst them are the sacrifices of the poor maidens of Brindaban, the Gopis.

"Who are these Gopis?" you might well ask, and "where is the Brindaban?" So remarkable are the lives of these Gopis, without parallel in the annals of religious literature, that it is impossible to find their compeers, and hence an esoteric interpretation of their lives is offered by secular critics who often aver that they were souls that did not dwell on the plane of humanity, and that all that has been said about them refers merely to a pilgrimage of the soul within a man. All such thinkers see in these descriptions *only* allegories and symbolism. But even though such

manifestations of love are rare in these days, that they are not impossible is fully borne out by the lives of devotees such as Sri Mira, Sri Andal and Sri Chaitanya. What further proof do you ask, than their seeing in the blue clouds the form of the dusky-coloured Krishna and in the flowing waters of the river the reflection of His blue-complexioned Form?

Others even doubted the Gopis' sanity. I state that the Gopis were not mad. The Gopis were not immodest, nor were they disobedient. But what were they to do in their helplessness? When the flute played, when the Beloved danced, when the Jamuna heaved, when the cows lowed, and when they drank from the Lord of Brindaban their fill of love, all resistance was impossible and when the call came they flew to Him like iron to the magnet. Not one, not two, but the whole host. No consideration was too great for them at the time. They lived in the fiery region of Love's Eternity, the cold of mortal life was unknown to them, it did not touch them. In fact the dark spots of worldliness spread like daubs on the silvery sheet of their devotion for the Beloved. They suffered. They wept. They bled, from a wound that knew no healing. Sorrow they had nurtured. Pain they had wooed. Sufferings they had made their kinsmen. Such was their family and they watched with glee and satisfaction as their yearning soul devoured the very sap of their existence during the pangs of separation from the peacock-crowned Shyam Sundar.

Krishna had stolen the Gopis' heart. He was a great thief. He was a pilferer too, who ate their butter and drank their milk. Often they had complained to mother Yasoda and they had seen Him reprimanded. But all this they did to invite Him again and allow themselves to fall a prey to His fresh pranks. How they longed to fall victims to His snare! How they craved to offer themselves to Him! How they wanted to be tortured by Him! They were

prepared to forego salvation in this life and in the life to come to secure sight of Him and to have His smile.

Even the gods aspired to a love like that of the Gopis for Krishna. But it was the special privilege of the maids of Brindaban. One remembers their lament for Him when He left Brindaban. How they prayed, "return again once more to these sylvan surroundings, to the old pastures, graze these cows and steal the fresh milk that we prepare. Once more perform Thy *lila* in the midst of the bowers of Brindaban. Let us hear the melodies of Thy flute and be lost in that ecstasy. O Cow-herd Boy! throw off Thy heavy diamond crown and put on the light peacock one, and wear the yellow *pitambara* and with the wreath of flowers, O Dear One! let us deck You, with the same *Vaijayanti* garland that once tossed on Thy bosom. O dance once again, our Lord of the heart, on the sacred soil of Govardhan."

In melancholy and in tears toilsome days and long nights were passed by the Gopis. But the Elusive One would not respond apparently showing no concern for those who turned pale and were unable to bear the pangs of separation from Him. He cared not that the lives of others hung by a thread.

But was this really His callousness? Ah no, for, when they asked Him "Can you leave the Gopis?" did He not answer "Oh never" and in answer to the question whether He could forsake Brindaban, He replied "not so long as there is breath in My body". Such was the attachment of this Child, for the laps of the Gopis of Brindaban. But His ways were capricious and it was difficult to follow them. Do you not remember how when they once approached Him in answer to His invitation for *RĀS LILA,* He turned a sour face and reprimanded them, for coming to Him in the night. They replied: "You rebuke us for having abandoned the house and strayed into

Your path. O Cruel One! Why do You not take to task the ravishing notes of your flute, Your dark raven hair, Your bewitching form that has drawn us away from our wonted pursuits to wander as maniacs in this infested forest in this dark night? The thunder, the clouds and the lightning terrify us. Does it then behove You to treat us thus coolly and advise us to return? You tormentor of Your lovers, You light and fan the fire of love in their bosom and then let them suffer the agonies of separation! Does it behove You to act thus, O Repository of Celestial Bliss? Sport again, O Beloved! amidst the blossoming lilies and enliven once again the beloved Jamuna by Thy carols. Let it once again heave its bosom and respond to the call of the melodious flute." And they entreated: "Open Thy portals to us pilgrims of love. We are fatigued by travel, our feet are blistered, and covered with dust and mud, our hair dishevelled, our body burnt, in running to Thee. O Dear One! don't chide us for our action. When suffering the pangs of separation, love goes mad, in its agony it sees all life as wildly striving after Thee. We see everywhere only Thy form, in the shade as in the sun, over the trees, as in the lanes of Brindaban. To us it seems the very heavens seek Thee. In running waters we see tears shed in sympathy for us and the galloping of the deer we interpret as a wild pursuit after Thee, O Elusive One! In our madness we ask of the creepers Thy whereabouts. How we envy the wild beasts of the forest with their loved ones at their side while we lament our misfortune in having lost our Beloved. To the *Chakor* we say, yes, go on watching the moon, foolish one! Remember, like us, your love is given to the moon who is itself turning pale in the love of someone else and cares not for you.

"Again and again doth the madness of love overpower us. Ah! its travail! In the dark night, with the clouds and thunder overhead, we come alone seeking Thee, leaving all that the world holds sacred—husbands and children.

Does it behove Thee then to chide us for immodesty, O Tantaliser? Thou hast made us helpless victims to the shafts of Thine love. Resist not now our call. We shall pursue Thee, over the hills and along the dales, to the very caves in the mountains. Let us see where Thou wilt then hide Thyself. We see Thee smile in the distance. Is it you, Oh Bitter One? We recognise Thy ways—Thou comest and Thou escapest again. In vain we rush madly to catch Thee but Thou art gone. Well! if Thou wilt not appear and embrace us we shall make our own existence and that of creation impossible. We shall stop the brooks flowing and insist on their answering our enquiry first 'Have they seen Thee?' and the winds we shall stop and ask 'Have they touched Thy Lotus Feet?' And of the silvery moonlight we shall enquire 'Has it kissed Thy lips?' From the sky we shall enquire 'Has it held its canopy over Thee?' The clouds we shall send out as messengers to Thee, laden with our tears, shed in separation from Thee. With the lightning we shall make friends that it may dazzle Thee by its brightness and make Thee forget Thy path; we shall befriend the darkness to make Thee lose Thy path while we shall hide ourselves behind the bowers as Thou stumbleth along the path. Beloved, verily we shall make Thee a prisoner, encage Thee in our eyes behind our eyelashes and, keeping night-long vigils, guard Thy exit. Let us see then how Thou escapest!

'But alack! All is in vain! All my plans frustrated. O my comrades, light you the fire of the heart, which the great passion which they call love, excites. Blow thou, the whirlwind—aye the tempest of love. Clouds, rain ye showers of affection, for today I set out a pilgrim to the temple of my love—to my Krishna in Brindaban. What with your prohibitions and commandments! What with the injunctions and ceremonials! I come to watch Thee,

intoxicated as the *Chakor* for the moon, the *Chatak* for the solitary drop of rain. A young maid crossing the dark path, in the dreary wilderness, I come to meet Thee. Alack, there is no sound to guide me! And as fall my steps, my heart revels in the thought that I might meet Thee. How I cry to the Wind 'O carry this message to Him.'

"Why, after wounding
This heart, hast Thou not healed it?
And why, after stealing it
Hast Thou thus abandoned it,
And not carried away the stolen prey?"

These then were the Gopis. And when they met Him the drop was lost in the Ocean of Love. The temple in their hearts once again held the Lord captive. He sat there in all humility on that high pedestal. The King who had left the kingdom once again returned, and they were happy. Alack! but their joy was short-lived and they doubted that what they saw was but a vision. For was He not ruling in the distant Mathura and in Dwaraka, a King, ailing and a broken heart yet yearning to meet the beloved maids of Brindaban. But His waiting was as futile as their yearning. Years passed and ages, and He came not. Finally they were lost in the sands of Braja, transmuted and transformed into a note which wherever you go even today is a soft murmur in the breeze "Where is our Krishna?"[1]. For what else is this cool breeze but the warm heart of the Gopis grown cool and turned into a sigh waiting and watching for Him—the Elusive One! Let us now ponder over the "Sighs of the Gopis."

[1] *Kvasi Krisna* (*Bhagwat*).

The Sighs of The Gopis[2]

(1)

In this Vale of Tears, bloomed a lotus. Came the *Bhramar* wooing it, singing to it. It came to clasp it, to give it the joy of His embrace. It knew the secret, for the wooer became the wooed, such was the warmth of that passionate touch.

Yes, it has been so, of yore, who came to make a prisoner, stayed as a prisoner, kissing the bonds he feared. In childhood I had read that the philosopher's stone turned dross to gold. I live in order to learn the alchemic touch of love, changing the lover into the beloved. Pilgrims of the Path ever crave for the shaft which comes from Him to linger on in the heart without piercing it, for the pang of love is greater than the stroke of Yama. (App. Item 4)

(2)

Come slowly, silently, softly and whisper into my ears, O Love! thy lost Song of Separation, for I yearn to kiss the hand of the hunter that preyed on my heart as on a deer.

Oh come softly, lest my ailing heart, asleep after a long vigil, awakens and finding its famished hope revived, in ecstasy, offer itself, life and soul, at Thy Lotus Altar.

Such shrivelled heart, sunken eyes and pallid cheeks, will tell their tale to my Master, and believe me He will listen. Such tales are ever new to Him; and He enjoys hearing them.

[2]This original text appears in the Appendix and is composed by "X"—the little known saint of Brindaban—whose sketch follows later. The translation given here into English is by the author of this work.

He will come to hear my tale. My friend, let me not believe in it, for burning hearts relish the fire, and prefer roasting to feeble beating. (App. Item 5)

(3)

Burn, O my heart, brilliantly.

Ah! I tell thee He cannot resist thy midnight glow; and turned to a moth, He will come, and lie wrapped in thy embrace.

Famished heart! Cry not. Thy hunger is not of the world and cannot be satisfied by it. He knoweth thy food and in the silence of night when the curtains are drawn, He cometh to appease thee.

My craving is most strange but for worlds I shall not give it up. It is a pang that hath come to me, by His grace, after many a life. Ah, what sanctity it bestows!

Touch it not with tarnished earthly fingers, nay, apply not the *prakritic* balsam to my wound. O physician, beware, you know not the pleasure of the wound that bleeds. (App. Item 6)

(4)

Tears flow, hearts bleed, sighs burn, that my famished soul that has gone to sleep may wake up and remember its lover, nay its Beloved.

Love is not love, if lover to Beloved it cannot turn.

Ash is not ash, if the spark of life it doth not contain.

Many in the world to ashes do turn, yes to cold ash, earth without and within: but the lover's ash still treasures the spark for the Beloved to come and enjoy the game of searching for it there.

O Thou, Master of my life. If life I offer Thee—what worth hath that offering in Thy eyes for when a spark returns to the fire or a ray to the Sun, its reentry does not enrich the whole: but with all Thy

wealth, I know Thou art a bankrupt. For I know, if Thy lover, his tear doth give Thee, his debt Thou canst repay. (App. Item 7)

(5)

My Master! I shall turn my heart into a garden of the lotuses you love. The seeds of sighs I shall sow, so that they shall need no more warmth from the sun. With tears I shall nourish them, so that they shall not seek the aid of rains: then will bloom roses of a myriad colours.

In the night when the full moon shall shine, I shall weave a garland for Thee in its light, seeking no other.

I ask Thee: "Wilst Thou accept that gift?" "Yes"—Thou repliest with a smile on Thy lips. I shall not be able to contain myself. And what treasure I shall get in the bargain, that gift, I shall hide, cherishing Thy Lotus Feet, for ever and ever. (App. Item 8)

(6)

Great is love: if love to the lover doth come. When the tale of separation is told, it comes, and pallid cheeks glow. Tears stop their course. They that were scorched as with poison, their nectarean draughts now draw.

Will it come in my life?

"Yes"—love! I fear to say "aye"—for that fulfilment of hope shall deprive me of my life. I relish to say "nay"—for, in hopelessness I can live.

Love is not love if it seeks fulfilment. Offering is not offering, if it wants a return. Such *Sakam* gifts please not my Master!

Burn therefore that the path of the Beloved may be lighted!

Draw warm sighs, that the cold of the way may not inconvenience His approach and then He will come.

Come—but not too near. For who can resist His charm. Like unto the lightning in the dark clouds, He, the dweller, over and beyond the realm of *Prakriti,* breaks through its veil to enrich thee by His smile and then disappears, for ever and ever. (App. Item 9)

(7)

Who can bear Thy majesty?

Moses tried to get a glimpse of it. He fell senseless and the mountain turned to ashes.

But some hapless lovers knew the secret, and the cowherd lasses of *Braja* knew what the prophets missed—and for long did they lure Him, in His fullness.

Master! away with Thy majesty and shine resplendent in the soothing lustre of love, that we may softly keep on our hard breasts Thy Lotus Feet, lest they get injured, and appease the fire of *kama* that is burning us.

Master! come: for we cannot endure a moment of separation from Thee. Such is our condition when you go out a cowherd to the jungles.

Master! come: and stay longer, to make good the time that seems like ages, when the fall and rise of the eye-lids warp Thy vision.

Master! come: and leave us not: make amends for the folly of Thy servant—Brahma, the Creator, who while reserving eight eyes for himself, gave us but two to feast on the beauty of Thy face.

Master! come and stay not away for long. (App. Item 10)

(8)

Heart! play the guitar.

Heart! tighten thy strings.

The Master will come and play the tune.

I live in this hope, and long have I been living in it.
I pass anxious hours, waiting to hear the song the
  Master will play on it.
I ask thee, shall I be able to bear the flow of His finger,
  and its coaxing as He shall awaken the music in my
  drowsy heart.
I know not.
Ye dweller in the path! tell me thine experience.
  (App. Item 11)

(9)

Believe me. I saw her the other day. The Gopi,
  separated from her Beloved, like a maniac pursuing
  the footprints of Him, who passed that way.
Believe me. I have heard her Song of Separation: her
  singing "Master! where art Thou gone—Beloved!
  Wilt Thou come?"
Believe me. I have noticed her clasping the creepers
  as she passed among them, whispering into their ear
  the question "tell me dear one, did you see Him
  pass, He who hath stolen my heart, the thief of
  Braja."
Believe me. I have seen their ecstasy—heard in it
  their cry. Let me make sure! am I not Krishna?
But all these have proved but inadequate means for the
  search, for He hath not come to the maniac who
  has surrendered her senses to suffer the madness for
  the Beloved. (App. Item 12)

(10)

Love all: but not the "Beloved"!
For the two are things that dwell poles asunder.
Love of the world burns. Love of the Lord heals.
Love of the world kills the living: love of the Lord
  revives the dead.
Such are the ways of the world and of the dwellers
  on the other shore.

The one, applies balsam to the wound: the other prays, that it may bleed all the more.
These life-draughts—the sighs for the Beloved— come close Beloved—and feel their warmth......
These tears—how they well up. Come near Beloved that Thy Lotus Feet may be drenched the night through, by them. (App. Item 13)

(11)

All night long I kept vigil. He came not.
Came the wind. It knocked. I felt that my Beloved had come, but it was merely the wind come to fan my suffering.
Pain is sweet to the Beloved. He sends His messenger —to bring news of it to me. Ah no! He sends it to fan the smouldering spark in me.
Cherish pain. It is dear to Him. Count not thy agony. Cater for His pleasure.
For that is the way of the Gopis. They burn to lighten the path of the Beloved. The more you burn the greater will be the light: easier will be His midnight march to you.
Besides——
Torches are lighted in marriage for the bridegroom to come, revealing the glory of His form. (App. Item 14).

(12)

Marriage ......Meeting ...... and after ......
The child of love is born not before the seed is planted by Him........Yes, by the Bridegroom Himself......then does the crop flourish—
The soul must play the bride to enjoy the celestial draughts of the Beloved's lips.
Nectar is valueless if it does not come from the Dear One. (App. Item 15)

———

Chapter II

MIRA BAI

(1547 A.D.—1614 A.D.)

"Loka lāj kül Śrankhlā taj Mira Girdhar bhaji
Sadriṣ Gopikā prem prakaṭ Kaljug hi dikhayo:
Nirankuṣ ati nidar rasik jus rasnā gayo
Duṣtaṇ dosh vichari mritu ko uddyam kiyo:
Bār na bakon bhayo garal amrit jyon piyo:
Bhakti niṣān bajāy ke kaho te nahin laji
Loka lāj kül Śrankhlā taj Mira Girdhar bhaji."

Mira forsook the decorum of society with its rules and forms, and adored Girdhar!
In this world she sang of the love of the Gopis, like one of them.
Fearless of all threat, and undeterred by torture she sang of the feats of Sri Krishna.
The cruel tyrants tested her faith—and administered poison.
But Mira emerged from the ordeal triumphant.
And unfurling the banner of Devotion to Girdhar, she passed away into Immortality. (Nabhadas)

My Gurudeva

I

What radiant devotion, what divine ecstasy, God-intoxication, paragon of incarnate beauty, and embodied emotion afire with love! "Tell me, who is it that I see on the Maharaja of Chitor's balcony watching me with pensive eyes, mute yet expressive, reciting her tale of woe and yearning for an embrace?" While bent on His *Gau-charan* (cattle grazing), Sri Krishna halted and thus enquired of



MIRA BAI Sketch: *R. Rawal*

situation or an experience of deep
emotional significance.
Songs of separation where the emotional
range stretchs from gentle sadness to
extreme anguish.
Spontaneity & lyricism 35
rich imagery
visual & auditory images? 36
Series of images - 36
Metaphors & similes from surrounding
nature

Padas - The Poetic Form - of
ten verse lines
The first line of the pada is called
'tek' (Prop) which expresses the central
theme. The second part antara elaborates
the idea. - Rag peelu expresses
pathos & restlessness -
every day vocabulary

His companion Madhumangal, on whose shoulder He lent and with avidity feasted His eyes on the glory shed by His beloved—the Princess.

"Mira"—came the sweet reply. "Mira"—"Mira"—"M-i-r-a" repeated Sri Krishna and He passed on. The voice died away.

There was a thud on the balcony and Mira lay senseless. It was an incident in a Divine scene brought about by *Yoga Maya.* When questioned on rising from her faint the beautiful Mira later recalled what she had seen and made answer in a melodious song to the accompaniment of the veena:—

(1)

"Today I witnessed the Lord of Beauty—my Girdhar!
Beautiful His form, such as would send a cupid into ecstasy.
His eyes shot forth captivating rays of effulgence.
He played deftly on the flute as amidst His companions He danced to its tune—
Since that moment His sweet Form has taken up its abode in my heart, and does not leave me for a moment.
I have surrendered myself and am verily a sacrifice to Him, and I lay down at His feet all modesty which the world honours.
Mira wooes Him, the Beloved of Brindaban, dweller of *Tulsi-Kunjas* with all her love." (App. Item 16)

A little later, surrounded by her *sakhis,* Mira, forgetting the rapture of this short *darshan,* started her lament:—

(2)

"Since I have met Him, my companions, adieu to all decorum and restraint of modesty, none pleases me —none can fetter me.

Ah! the peacock-crown He donned and the beautiful coloured *tilak* on His forehead.

Who in the three worlds can resist His charms? all fall a victim to His blandishments.

The reflection of the ear-rings falling on His bright cheeks—

Looks as if the fish were playing in the blue deep.

His playful eyes and His crooked eye-brows shame the very *Khanjan*—birds

And the beauty of His nose and His charming dress,

There is the redness of the lips crowned with His bewitching smile,

His sparkling teeth and the ornaments decorating Him—

All these, says Mira, force me to be a veritable surrender to the beauty of every part of His body." (App. Item 17)

A little later she started in a different strain:—

(3)

"My eyes offered themselves to Him and would not return, they were held up in the meshes of His beauty.

From head to foot they were enjoying Beauty's ecstasy.

Ah! *sakhi,* as He passed below my balcony displaying a million poses (as it were) He was throwing handfuls of Beauty's effulgence.

Can then the decorum of society withstand the madness of love that rushes to make surrender to Him?

Mira has made her election—she cannot live without Him for a moment and says adieu, O! world and your rigid forms." (App. Item 18)

Who can gauge the depth of her agony—at this meeting and then this sudden parting! The distant mountains resounded with her lamentations for her Girdhar. This was

no isolated experience. From time to time since her childhood this princess had witnessed the *lilas* of her Lord. Now she was eighteen—but there had been an occasion, when as a mere child her heart was won over by her Girdhar. I will tell you how it came about. When she was three, a sannyasin came with his little idol of Girdhar to her father Ratan Singh's mansion in Khurki (Mewar). Mira felt this idol was her own and, by threatening to fast unto death if he would not give it to her, she obtained Girdhar from him. Thenceforward the sole joy of her life and interest was centred in it.[1]

One day when she was only five, a bridegroom accompanied by a band passed under her balcony. The little child inquired, "Mother! where is *my* bridegroom?" The mother smiled at the innocence of the child and answered "There—the lovely little Idol—Girdhar Nagar is thy bridegroom." From that time Mira was silent to all, started her tete-a-tete only with her Lord. How she loved Him, let her poems describe:

(4)

"Mine eyes ache for a sight of Thee;
Since Thou hast left me, my Lord, I have found no rest,
My bosom heaves at Thy name, so sweet does it sound.
I have fixed my sight on Thy path and await Thy return. The night seems half a year.

[1]Another tradition prevalent in Mewar is to the following effect: Mira when a child nearing the age of three, approached her mother who was busy with her affairs, and picking up a stone said, 'Mummy! what is this?' The mother replied 'A stone!' and asked her to throw it away. Mira threw it away and a little later brought another and put the same question. The mother answered as before. Mira threw away that stone also. Bringing yet another stone she repeated the question a third time to the mother, who, irritated at being disturbed replied, 'it is thy *khasam* (husband)'—(the pet rebuke often given to children). Mira however accepted that stone as her Lord Saligram and started to worship it.

O! to whom shall I recite the tale of the pangs of separation?
My friend, I feel as if the saw is being applied to my eyes,
When wilt Thou meet me, O Lord of Mira—
Thou who bestows joy and allays pain?
For Thee—night after night, I keep vigil and make the same lament." (App. Item 19)

(5)

"O friend! all the world sleeps; I, the parted one, sit awake.
There is no other like me who sits in her palace of pleasure, strings together a necklace of pearls.
But yet I know another who weaves a garland of tears.
I pass the whole night counting the stars; when shall the hour of joy arrive?
Mira's Lord is Girdhar Nagar: It is on meeting Him that she shall be relieved from anguish." (App. Item 20)

A little later a similar cry found expression in words of great anguish.

(6)

"I pass the night in sleeplessness—counting the hours—when will the day break?
The moonbeams torture me and the moon like a rapier frowns, and wakes me from my dream,
Sighing and pining I pass the hours, when will the morning dawn?
Madness has won me for her own, all consciousness of the body is gone, who can interpret my feelings?
Only He—the Bestower of Life and Death—can know what is befalling His Mira!" (App. Item 21)

What a pathetic condition! Again Mira sings:

(7)

"Mira has become mad.
Standing on the house top she wails and cries ah! my Lord! my Beloved One!
The days pass—I neither eat by day nor sleep by night.
I have grown careless of my body, and as the clothes slip off I turn naked.
How hard! I rub away my tears with my flowing garments.
By tears I plead and entreat Thee.
Lord! why didst not Thou give a message to Mira when Thou parted from her?" (App. Item 22)

Who can picture the agony in Mira's heart as she prays:—

(8)

"Visit me, Thou—the King of my heart!
I am being consumed in separation from Thee—come slake my thirst for Thee
I pass my night in traversing the courtyard over and over again
Desire for food and sleep have left me. Why does not my life-breath forsake me?
Give life to the ailing one O! Lord! by Thy *Darshan*". (App. Item 23)

Mira can bear no more, not even a moment's separation and again she cries:—

(9)

"These eyes demand to be fed on Thy beauty. Pray appear before them.
Now that Thy sweet face is ever the subject of my contemplation and this longing hath made a permanent abode in my heart.
Tell me, how can I live if Thou deniest me Thy vision?
Consider how long I have been expecting to see Thee.

Mira is sold into Thy hands, now that the people speak scandal about me, Dear One, own me." (App. Item 24)

Who but the Lord would torture His devotee with such pang of separation! With the devotees here and everywhere His ways have been the same. When the Gopis commented on this cruel character of His, did He not say—

"nāham tu sakhyo bhajto 'pi juntuṇ
Bhajaṃyiṣamanuvritīvrityey,
yathā 'dhano labdh dhaney vinaṣtey
Tatcintyānyennibhritu na ved."

(*Bhagwata* X. 32—20)

"I—the Embodiment of Mercy—how can I be cruel and that to my Devotees too?

Ah never. My disappearance is only a veil that I draw in order nourish their yearning and love for Me by fire of separation. As a poor man, hitting by chance on a treasure and again losing it, is constantly brooding over it, so I wish my devotee should not for a moment forget Me."

This constant remembrance by Mira made her pass sleepless nights, with the sobs and wails for her only companions. How emaciated she had become! She narrates her condition to her *sakhis*:—

(10)

"*Sakhi!* I have lost my sleep.

My comrades offered me their counsel, but to none did my heart pay any heed.

The whole night I passed waiting for the Beloved.

Without sight of Him, my heart is restless, ah! so stubborn it is grown!

My body is emaciated; I am without peace, and

The pain of separation consumes my heart, yet the Name of the Dear One is ever on my lips.

Like the *Chatak* crying out for the clouds, like the fish pining for the water,

Mira lies restless in her separation from her Beloved— so is she lost to herself!" (App. Item 25)

Mortal eyes could not correctly interpret Mira's Krishna-love-madness and as is the custom of the world, inspite of her protests, at the tender age of eight Mira was married to Prince Bhojraj, the beloved younger son of Maharana Pratap of Chitor in 1555 A.D.

The world delighted over this august marriage: but Mira even at those ceremonials held Girdhar in her lap and considered she was married only to Him. The loving mother at the time of parting approached her child Mira with offers of emerald and ruby garlands and ornaments to take to her husband's home. Mira however would have nothing of the sort and pleaded for only one gift and gave her reasons:—

(11)

"Mother! bestow on me my Girdhari[2]
I want no ornaments, nor garments.
I crave not even for mansions.
Believe me, by my troth, I say Girdhari is
Dearer to me than my life.
I have completely surrendered to Him."
(App. Item 26)

And as the mother clasped her child to her, little did she know that her daughter—the consort of Sri Krishna, incarnated to enact and sing, for her Beloved's sake, of the Gopis' love of bygone days—would have to don the cobra instead of garlands, would have to sleep on the bed of nails instead of silken beds, and for nectarean drops

[2]The Idol she worshipped.

would have to swallow bitter poison. And do all that cheerfully in Love's name. Oh, how bitter is this pang of separation—Sri Radha, the Queen of the Gopis, has sung:—

> *"Dalati hrdyam garhodvegam dvidha na to vidhyetey*
> *Vahati viklah kayo murcham na munchati cetnam.*
> *Jwlati tanumantdaha karoti na bhasmsat*
> *Prharati vidhirmarmchedi na krantati jivitaṃ."*[3]

> "My heart is being mutilated but not torn asunder by the axe of separation from Sri Shyam Sundar: My body falls senseless in the agony, if only breath should quit it for ever! My limbs are afire but do not turn to ashes. Ah! my ill luck! O Creator! why dost Thou kill me so slowly? Why dost thou not take my life all at once?"

> *"Uttapi pütpakto' pi garalgramādapi shobhno*
> *Dambhöleyrapi düsāh katürlaṃ hrinmagn ṣalyādapi*
> *Tibrah prorḥ visöchikā nichyato 'pi mamayamvali*
> *Marmanpadya bhinnati Gokulpater viṣleṣ janmajvara."*

"Ah! in the pang of separation from the Lord of Gokul, my heart is being broken to pieces, the agony of the fire is past description. My heart is being tortured as if heated in a chemist's crucible. The pain's intensity cannot be compared even with the severest type of cholera, it is so piercing, terrible and agonising."

> *"Mano mey hā kaṣtaṃ jwalatï kim'ham hänt! Karvey*
> *Na pārām na vārām sümükhi! Kalyāmyas jaldhey,*
> *Yiyam bande mürdha sapadi tamupayam kathye mey*
> *Paramrṣye yasmāḍ dhriti kanyakapi ṣanikya."*[4]

"*Sakhi!* My heart is experiencing great pain. I am literally burning as a *sati* on a pyre. The flames are leaping

[3]*Shri Lalit Madhav* by Shri Rup Goswami.
[4]*Hans Dut* by Sri Rup Goswami.

up on account of the pangs of separation. I cannot see the shore of this wide sea of pain in which I am being drowned. Ah *Sakhi* Lalite! I bow before thee, and as a suppliant I pray of thee—by some means obtain for me an interview with the joy of my heart—Sri Krishna."

And yet the lover of Krishna will not bargain this agony for the peace of Nirvana.

This *virah* (pang of separation) is the crest-jewel of Krishna's love to the devotee, it is the thread by which hangs his life. Some even go so far as to say:—

> "*Sungam virah vikalpe varmi virho na sungamas-tasyey yekaḥ sa ev sangey tribhuvanamapi tanmayaṃ virhey.*"[5]

"Who knoweth the glory of the pang of separation? Is it not more delicious than the joy of meeting? For while in meeting you meet only one Krishna, once you enter the Valley of Separation the world becomes full of an infinite number of Krishnas."

Of course Gopis view things differently, and Mira was such a one—She wanted ONE Krishna to love and embrace, not *Krishnamaya Sansar* (a world full of infinite Krishnas). The Gopis' goal of life is the same as has been portrayed by the Catalan mystic who says:—[6]

> "To what other end was man created, called, invited, ravished; if not for the conjugal embraces and kisses of God"!

[5] *Laghu Bhagwatamrit* by Sri Rup Goswami.
[6] *Spanish Mysticism* by E. Allison Peers.

And in this Mira's determination was like that of a *Chatak:*

"Virachye mayi dandaṃ dinbandho dayanwa
Gatirhi na bhavtaḥ kachidanya mamasti
Nipatato shatkotirnibhram vānvambḥ—
Astadapi kil payodāḥ stooyetey chatkeṇ."

(Sri Rup Goswami)

"Lord! deal with me as Thou wilst. Ordeals and torture —I shall endure all, for I know of no súpport but Thee. I have learnt a great lesson from the *Chatak* bird who does not turn away from the clouds even if instead of nectarean rain drops they shower hail-stones".

Imbued with such feelings Mira—the *ananya* devotee of Sri Krishna—reached her husband's home Chitor, the abode where Kali, the war-goddess was worshipped. When she was taken there and her people insisted that she pay her obeisances to the goddess—she sternly replied and with determination:

"Pul katö sahi in nainan ke Girdhari binā pal antnihareṇ
Jibh katey na bhajey Nandnandan budhi katey Hari-nambisarey
'Mira' kahey jar javo hiye pud kunj binā pälantär dharey
Śis navey Brajraj bina wuh sïshi kät kunwāṇ kin darey."

"May these eye-lashes be torn, if they look even for a moment upon anyone besides Girdhar: may this tongue be cut to pieces if it recites not the name of Girdhar constantly, and farewell O my intellect if thou meditate not on Him. Burn this heart if it does not worship the Lotus Feet of the Lord always, and if ever this head should bow to one besides Brajraj cut it off and cast it into the well."

Then followed her persecutions—the cup of poison, the bed of nails, the garland of cobra and the threat of arms. Mira recites her trials and experiences, sings of the Lord's mercy on her in several of her songs. We give below one of her songs with elaborate commentary to help readers to interpret the esoteric language of her songs to follow later:—

"Ab naḥin bisroon mharey hrday likho Hari nam.
Mharey Satguru diyo batāy, ab nahin bisroon rey.
Mira baythi mahal men re, üthat baithat Ram
Sevā Karsyān sādh ki mharey aur nā düja kam.
Rānā ji batlayia, kayi dinö jwab
Puṇ lagö Hari nām so mharey din din duno labh.
Sip bharyö pani pive re, tunk bharyö aṇ kḥay
Batlayān bö!e nahin re, Rānāji gayö risay.
Bish Ka pyala Rānāji bhejya dijo Merhatni ke hath
Kar charnamrit pi gayi re, mhara sabal dhani ka sath,
Bish ka pyala pi gayi re, bhajan karey üs thaur
Thäree maree na maroon mhara rākhan hara aur.
Rānāji mo par kopyo re marün ekan sayl
Maryān parachit lāg si mhane dijo pihar mayl.
Rānāji mopay kopyo re, rati na rakhyo möd
Lejati Vaikuntha *main yau to samjho nahin Sisod.*
Chapa tilak *banayya tajya sab sringar*
Main to sarney Rama ke bhaley ñindö sansär.
Mālā mharey devrhi, sïl barat sringār
Ab ke kripa kijyo re, hün to phir bandhoon talwār.
Rathan bail jootayi ke ütan kasyo bhār
Kaisey töroon Ram sün mharö bho bhoro bhartār.
Rānā sāndyo mokalyo jajyo yeke daūr
Kul ki taran 'stri ya to murrar Chali Rathor
Sandyo pache pheryo, re parat na desyan pāun
Kar süra pun nisri mhare kün Ranö kun Rāo.
Sansāri nindā kare re dükhya sab parivār.
Kül sarö hi lājsi 'Mira' thain jo bhaya ji khvār.
Ratī māti prem ki bish bhagat ki mörh
Rām amal mātī rahey, dhan Mirā Rāthor."

Now, I cannot forget the Name of the Lord—which like the Lord's form, *lila* (exploits), *dham* (abode), *gunas* (attributes) is like unto Him in efficacy and power. It is *alokik* (Divine)—*sat-chit-anand swarup* (supernatural). It is eternal and leads its followers to the Divine realm of Eternity. Name, which I had been repeating for a long time, *now* (she lays emphasis here) has been engrafted in my heart by my satguru, who is established in Divinity.[7]

Besides, like the atman which one cannot forget for a moment, so it is impossible to forget the Name (which is of the same species) if imparted as above by a *satguru*. Just as the atman although always working in us is *seen* only by those who have developed the mystic eye by *sadhana* and grace of the guru (vide *Gita* XV 10, 11) so also although it is well known (vide *Nad-Bindu-Upanishad*) that the Word (AUM) is the creator of Universe and sustains it—yet this supersensual word (styled *Anhad*) is only heard, as by Mira, by the grace of the guru and by initiation of the Name by him. Miraji says, "the Name" is grafted in her heart—not the physiological heart but the spiritual heart (located in the middle of the chest towards the right). It is of this heart that the Christian mystic speaks:—"by heart He is *beholden* and gotten but by the mind never." This is the same heart where the Lord Himself says He has made His seat (vide *Gita* XV-15). This heart is of the nature of the Lord (—the *vibhutiman—anshi*) and synonymous with Him, while the mind and its creature *gyan* is merely an attribute (—*vibhüti*—) of His (*Gita* VII—2 and X-38). Initiation by a guru leads one to acquire the special taste for the Name. The senses addicted to delight in sensual objects now taste the supersensual

[7]*Vide—Sri Granth Sahib* where Saint Raidas in his memorable song 'Begumpurā Shahar kö nām'—asserts that he is established in Divinity and has come to the world from the emancipated Abode of Lord to succour some of His lovers in the world and take them back Home.

gift and naturally lose all delight and affection in creation and thus pave their way to the Abode of the Lord (*Gita* XV—6).

Mira says, it is not necessary for me to retire to a wilderness. For the realm of dimensions—time, space and body does not fetter me. On grasping the spirit, material tools fall off. Therefore, I sit in my mansion day and night and repeat the Name and perform the service of the saints, which *Karma* (activities) alone are divine in this ephemeral world, for only through these actions performed disinterestedly can one get emancipation which is the real goal of life. All others, however noble in the eyes of the world, cause but bondage.

Mira says, those whose eyes are mortal and blended with worldliness cannot follow my present state and activities because they are (*pravriti-rūrḥ*) established in activities involving out-going energy. They cannot know that to me is given the divine eye of the Name so that I know that what is real is not visible and what is unreal is visible (vide *Gita* II—69) to the people of the world, established in body-consciousness. The Rana sees in all my activities nothing but idleness and evil. He does not know, in the words of Christ, "that the cream and climax of superactivity is contemplation which is superior to activism, the lowest rung in the climb to the Divine." Mira in brief, propounded the gospel of eternal (Nirguna—*Gunatit*—) *Karma yoga*—for such *Karma* alone can be *Nishkam*. Even the giver of the *Gita* stated that it is very difficult to understand *Karma Yoga* so that the Pandit and even Rishis fail to grasp it (vide *Gita* IV—16). Mira performs and defines *Karma Yoga*. Readers will easily be able to follow the conception of *Nishkam Karma Yoga* in the words of Christ from the Parable of the Two Sisters, Martha and Mary:—

> "Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village and a certain woman named Martha received Him in her house.

And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus's feet and heard His word.

But Martha was encumbered by much serving and came to Him and said, 'Lord! dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.'

And Jesus answered and said unto her 'Martha! Martha! thou art careful and troubled about many things;

But *one thing is needful,* and Mary has chosen the *best* part, which *shall never be* taken away from her."

(*St. Luke* X—38 to 42).

Here we have *Nishkama Karma-yoga,* beautifully and concisely defined just as in the *Gita* the Lord says "that *Karma* alone is to be followed that the *mumukshu* (seeker after emancipation from the cycle of rebirth) has followed (*Gita* IV—15) besides which all so-called good (*Sattva-günmay*) works are merely a source of bondage (*Gita* IX—28). Ye must rise above them, knowing the futility of all human worldly activities and day and night try to remember Me" (*Gita* IX—33)

To the same effect says Christ—(we quote here the comment by the Author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* on the above quotation from the *Bible*) :–

"Lo! friend, all these works, these words and this behaviour that showed between our Lord and these two sisters, be set an example of all actives and contemplatives that have been since in Holy Church, and shall be to the Day of Doom...................... And right as Martha complained then on Mary her sister, right so yet unto this day all actives complain of contemplatives (pp. 29)...... And so me thinketh that these worldly living men and women should also full well be held excused for complaining words touched before, although they say rudely what they say having regard to

their ignorance............These folks now-a-days know little, or else nought, what these young disciples of God mean when they set them from the business of this world, and draw them to be God's special servants in holiness and rightfulness of spirit. And if they knew, truly I dare say that they would neither do nor say as they say. And therefore me thinketh that they should always be held excused: because they know no better living than that they live in themselves." (pp. 30)

Christ said, "Martha, Mary has chosen the *best* part. 'Good' part consists in doing *bodily* works of mercy and charity, while better consists 'in spiritual meditations of a man's own wretchedness, of the passion of Christ, and of the joy of heaven'. The first part and the second although they be both good and holy yet they end with this life. But the third (best) part that Mary chose, let him choose who by grace is called to choose. Or if I trulier shall say: whoso is chosen to that part by God let him lustily lean thereto. For that shall never be taken away, for it beginneth here but it shall last without end. Established in this part, she is so completely occupied by Love for Him that even when the Angels offer an intercession, she does not give ear to it." (Pp. 33).

Why this special love of our Lord for Mary?—Surely, because she loved Him much; and Christ meant through her example to teach the world what devotion and love may purchase of our Lord. She was so deeply disposed towards the love of His Godhead that she had little regard unto the beauty of His precious and blessed body, in which he sat, speaking and preaching before her, not yet to anything else bodily or spiritually (pp. 27). And what did our Lord say to Mary who represented all sinners that are *called* to contemplative life: "Thy sins be forgiven thee" (*Luke* 7-47). Not because of her great sorrow, not for her thought of her sins, not yet for her meekness when she beheld her wretchedness. But why then?

Surely BECAUSE SHE LOVED HIM MUCH (pp. 26). She did not feel sorry for her sins because she had them all her life-time, to the point of satiation, but this present love came for the first time and, as is its nature,—"the more she loved, the more she longed for it." "So possessed was she with it that she had no thought of her sins and no ear to hear her sister calling and so in defence of such contemplatives (as is the way of the Lord vide *Gita* IX—22) the Lord answered for her. Ye know not what aileth them. Let them sit in rest and in their play with the third and best part of Mary." (33)[8]

It was this special love of our Lord for Mary that would not permit anyone to say anything against her. This love of the Master because Mary seated herself at his feet anointing them with the best ointment, washing them with her tears, and drying them with her hair. She was completely oblivious of her sweet voice, unparalleled beauty, charming grace of her body nor did she hear her sister Martha. "She had responded to the noblest call from within —the stirring of her soul—by His Grace—and she elected the *best* part nay became established in the best part by His Grace showered on her because of her love for Him."

Likewise Maulana Jelaluddin Rumi insists and states that the highest stage of Love which leads to realisation is (*tark ma siwa Allah*) the renunciation of *all* that is NOT-GOD.

In short Mira points out that this great work—loving Girdhar—is an activity so vast in length and breadth, so profound in depth and so high that it should not and cannot leave time for any activity besides that, in this world—total surrender in every respect is the necessary prelude to success in the path. So answers Mira: "O Rana the work in which I am engaged profits me and thee, in this world and the next."

[8]*The Cloud of Unknowing.* Edited by Don Justin MaCarn.

Mira goes on to describe the stages in the ascent; how as she proceeds on the march upward—she is more and more established in the Eternal Effulgence of *Parm-Atmic* consciousness-Love. The Ape and the Tiger in her cease to smart as also hunger for food and rest disappears. The yearning for the Lord reaches a climax, and the hindrance of the senses does not anyway stop her flight. *Now* a drop of water for drink and a particle of grain for food is enough to sustain the body. She is lulled into silence now, and the lover of Girdhar the *Mayapati*—has no time left to converse with *Maya* and its creatures—the world and its worldly ones.

Mira recites the ordeals which fell to her lot as they did to other martyrs in the path, Sarmad, Christ and other Lovers of God. Caesar's debt must be re-paid. *Prakritic* demands must be met and the body must suffer and drink draughts of poison. Mira drinks it, and as Maulana Rumi says—

> "Gar vali zahre khurad noshey shawad
> Där khurad talib siyāh poshey shawad"

In the hands of the saint the poison turns to nectar, as it is cheerfully quaffed off in the name of the love of the Beloved. Interpret this incident by Sri Sukdeoji's axiom "If the saints established in the eternal Lotus Feet of Beloved Sri Krishna, like Shiva, quaff poison, it leaves them unharmed." (*Bhagwat* X—31). Mira's divine origin is established by this miraculous incident of her life.

Mira in a subsequent poem of her's says "on drinking the poison I smiled".[9] This was because she saw in the cup the *antaryami* (the omniscient Lord) smiling bewitchingly at her, and she felt that she was not drinking poison, rather draining spiritual draughts from the nectarean lips of the Lord.

[9] 'Zahar ka pyala Ranaji bheja
Peevat Mira hansi.'

Mira encourages devotees to seek the cross in order to wear the crown that follows in its wake and will be conferred on them by the Lord and she strengthens in them their faith to face such trials.

Boldly does Mira reprimand Rana, "Futile are all thy attempts to kill me. My saviour is the omnipotent, omniscient Girdhar", and she sits fearlessly in the same spot continuing her devotions—because as she says in a later poem, "Never change your posture (*Asana*) for that is the essence of the practice of *Bhakti.*"[10]

Seeing that Rana's mischief would know no end, and that such ignoble acts, as the persecutions of the saints were rapidly paving his way to hell, she asks to be allowed to go away to her parents.

Mira again points to her spiritual status as a *nitya parshad* (attendant of the Lord in His abode in *Vaikuntha*)—the Gopi of Eternal *dham*—when she says "alack! if thou hath but followed my words, you would easily have been taken away by *me* to *Vaikuntha* and would easily have crossed the ocean of metempsychosis to dwell eternally with Girdhar in His divine effulgent *ABODE.*" This capacity is especially remarkable for there are two classes amongst the emancipated saints of the highest order—one, those who have themselves obtained emancipation by *sadhana* and through Grace, but who can only show the *way* to emancipation but cannot take one back to His Eternal Home if he is ill-equipped. In other words, they have gained salvation and can only show the way but cannot emancipate others. Their followers must work their own way with their help.

[10]"*Asan mār adig hoy baithyo, yahi bhajan ki rit*"

But Mira belongs to the other class of whom St. John (III 13) says:

> "There is no man that may ascend into Heaven but only he that hath descended from Heaven and became man for love of man."

This class of saints, if loved, gains automatic redemption of all sins and a seat in Lord's Abode, for a devotee. Here Mira describes the supernatural *swarup* (form) of *satguru* and in effect says "The gurus that descend from Heaven are embodiment of His Grace. They are not men who ascend to Heaven by effort and *sadhana* and hence their supernatural power to redeem sinners. Their body is not *karma*-created as that of the former class.

Miraji also speaks of the fate of the followers of the pseudo-gurus as also of the heretics, mockers and revilers of *satgurus*. In the words of the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* :—

> "I trow that whoso will not go the strait way to heaven —such as a blasphemer of saints, of sacraments and of ordinances of Holy Church—shall go the soft way of Hell. (vide also *Gita* XVI—21). Each man must prove himself by his deeds, for I trow that all such heretics *and all their favourers*, if they might clearly be seen as they shall be on the last day, would be seen to be secretly cumbered in great and horrible sins of the world in their foul flesh, apart from their open presumption in the maintaining of error" (pp. 72.)

Miraji is in effect stating in emphatic terms the Gospel of Grace conferred by the saints, and its efficacy. "This special grace is fully and freely given according to the ability on thy part to receive it. It is in thy power to develop that ability, which is a strong and deep sorrow, an insatiable yearning for meeting the Lord. But in trying

to gain this capacity beware lest you strain your body so rudely that you soon fall into feebleness and weariness. Remember you seek to moisten your soul with Grace, therefore break it not by too much drying—aye hurt it not. However great thy hunger and however sorely felt do not snatch overhastily like a greedy greyhound. Remember also that not without reason has God coupled the body with soul." (vide *Gita* XVII—6). Here one caution should be given. A seeker in the path should not in the advanced stage content himself with joys—sounds, sweet perfumes etc. which he experiences—coming through the windows of senses but he should go in for the joy that wells up spontaneously at the stirring of love at any time without stimulation, as the result of a genuine experience.

Miraji emphasises that at the advanced stage, "surely and verily the soul shall break down all knowing and feeling of creatures and particularly of thyself. All other creatures should be lightly forgotten......Then alone nothing shall remain betwixt thee and thy God." And in the words of Richard of St. Victor "The occasion will arise for the highest work of God, the supreme mystic experience—an illumination coming as a flash of dazzling light in the soul Surely when thou art established in this stage thy prayers to Him are the work of God. It is devotion's reward that God Himself starts His work in thee." It is *this* devotion which Miraji insists on your developing.

Miraji is in fact echoing what the Christian mystic says "Naked proceed to the Naked Christ" or the Buddha "Be a monk" or Christ "Sell all and follow me."

Miraji goes on to describe the articles needed on the path and here as the preacher and practiser of true *Vaishnavism,* she says, "the *tulsi-mala,* (rosary), the sandal paste, the *tilak*-mark are all my ornaments and decorations. What care I if people mock my dress?"

Miraji was pursued and urged to turn back but she replied, "the pursuer of the true path in God never returns when once he has taken it, for him the world-creature of body-consciousness is dead and dead are all fleshly relationship. He has transcended body-consciousness and lives on the *Atmic* level of consciousness." This is the great truth that the Buddha taught:

> "There is naught in all the world that I can cling to without sin.
> Those who have a hundred dear ones have a hundred woes. Those who have ninety dear ones have ninety woes......those who have one dear one have one woe. Those who hold nothing dear have no woe."

The Buddha does not say such affections are wicked. He states they are pledges to fortune and that he who breaks the ties and exchanges *family life for that of the monk* has an assured place which the *householder* can never possess. "Your inner peace should not depend on your friend" (*Psalms of Sisters*—Mrs. Rhys Davies). Thus Miraji, intoxicated with the wine of Divine Love, roamed about—sometimes in the company of the saints but often alone, weeping and wooing her divine Bridegroom with tears.

[We have tried to indicate the way one should approach Mira's poems found in this work. For lack of space while interpreting *in extenso* one of her poems as above we have given only brief free translations of other poems leaving readers to interpret them on the same lines as shown by us.]

II

We are again with Miraji in her travail and ordeal. She sings:

(12)

"Thou, my companion in life and death,
Thee I cannot in life forsake.
Without the sight of Thee, I am comfortless,
Ask and my heart shall bear witness.
Higher and higher I climb for seeking the sight of Thee
And I pass the nights in shedding tears.
This world is false, a mere phantom, an illusion,
All relations false are and all connections untrue.
With folded hands, I stand a suppliant
Hear my prayer, lend Thine ear to me.
Like unto a mad elephant this mind of mine is distracted,
And had much tortured me with waywardness till my *satguru* subdued it and set it at rest.
Now every moment I have His *darshan* and thereby live in peace.
Mira's Lord is Girdhar Nagar, at whose Lotus Feet she ever dwells." (App. Item 27).

(13)

"For Thy sake, O darling one! I forsook all comforts—why dost Thou now remain away from me?
My heart is aflame with the fire of Thy separation come Thou and comfort me
Since it is not possible for me to evade its hold, come Thou smiling therefore to meet me.
Mira is Thy own—through ages—why dost not Thou come and embrace her?" (App. Item 28).

(14)

"Dear One! bestow Thy vision on me, I can't bear Thy separation any more.

As the lotus without water, the night without the moon, so am I suffering without Thee.

Restless, pining I rush in all directions and know no rest, while Thy separation is devouring me inwardly.

I cannot relate my tale of agony, as I pass nights without sleep and days without food.

Thou alone can hearken to my unspeakable tale and comfort me. So come.

Why dost Thou thus torture me by the pangs of separation? Come and console me, Thou who already dwellest in my heart!

Mira, is Thy *dasi* (attendant) of ages, today she kneels before Thee and offers her obeisances. Accept them and own her as Thine." (App. Item 29).

(15)

"Hear Thou Shyam—the plaint of Thy *dasi*

Who is completely devoted to Thee.

Longing to see Thee I have become mad, crushed by separation's agony as in the vicious circle.

Truly, for Thy sake, I shall become a *yogin* and wander a mendicant in the wilderness,

Seeking Thee amidst the lovely bowers.

I shall sprinkle ashes on the body and the deer-skin shall enwrap me.

Alas! again today I have not met Thee, O Eternal One, as I wander in tears through the jungles.

But not so, Mira saw her Lord Girdhar, the consoler and then all her agony was over.

Every fibre of her body found rest, transmigration ended and she was claimed by Him as His for ever." (App. Item 30).

(16)

"Depart not O *yogi!* I beseech Thee, accept my supplications.

The path of Love is difficult. Pray instruct me and help me out of its difficulties.

Or if the agony of separation Thou witnesseth is my lot then I myself shall light the sandalwood fire.

Lay me on the pyre and when I am burnt Thou mayest depart after besmearing Thy body with my ashes.

Once Mira's soul is dissolved in Thy effulgence, of course, you can pass on." (App. Item 31).

(17)

"I lay my petition before Thee, O Supporter of the meek! hear it and then pass the verdict Thou deemeth proper.

I am being carried away as on a current by the cycle of rebirth, if it pleaseth Thee extricate me from it.

Only this I have learnt here, that in this world, none is really one's own—father, mother, and relations are all selfish.

Therefore, prays Mira, if it behoves Thee, offer Thou Thy Lotus Feet, for Mira to cling to as a raft and save herself." (App. Item 32).

(18)

"Save me now that Thou hath made me a consort—taking my hand in Thine, O Lord!

Thou art Omnipotent, I have surrendered unto Thee. Thou! Accomplisher of all deeds:

Very terrible are the currents of the ocean of metempsychosis. Pray, be for me the ship and take me across.

Thou! O Teacher of the world, art the shelter of the shelterless—Thou art their refuge.

Thou hast through the ages helped Thy devotees out of the cycle of rebirth and given them salvation.

It is but meet, that Thou saveth from calumny and dishonour Mira, who is a suppliant at Thy feet." (App. Item 33).

(19)

"Pray! bestow a kindly glance, O Lord. So long has Mira stood in supplication before Thee,

Without seeing Thee, kind Lord. All my relations are turned enemies and are hard on me.

Who else but Thee can be my pilot and saviour, as my boat labours amidst the troubled waters.

I know no rest in the night nor comfort in the day. I stand in agony.

The arrow of separation has struck my heart, I cannot even for a moment forget its pain.

O Lord! Ahalya, though of stone, Thou saved by a mere touch,

What weight doth Thou find in Mira, who is so light, that Thou hesitateth to save her?" (App. Item 34).

(20)

"I pray Thee Girdhar! My Shyam! Take me into Thy service.

I will work as a gardener, daily gathering new flowers.

As a reward I shall have the gift of Thy vision.

I shall be a singer daily singing songs of Love in Thy Brindaban.

Very rich will be my inheritance, for contemplation of Thy form, remembrance of Thy name and *Bhakti* shall be my lot.

How beautiful is Thy form, Darling—donning the peacock crown and wearing the bright lightning-like *Pitambar,* the garland of flowers dangling on Thine breast.

O! Thou the cow-herd-boy! O! Thou the flute-player!

Daily shall I plant new creepers of variegated flowers for Thee;

And dressed in a yellow *sari*—I shall have Thy *darshan.*

As for my present company, I have the *yogis* who impart *yogic* secrets to me; the *Sanyasis* who teach the marvels of *tapas* (austerities), and the devotees of Braja come to make me lose myself in the ecstasy of *Bhakti.*

Very merciful art Thou Girdhar, says Mira, that hearing my humble prayer,

At dead of night, by the side of Jamuna, Thou appearest before me in Form Effulgent." (App. Item 35).

III

While Mira was thus passing her days in *satsang,* the young Bhojraj who loved her, passed away. After his death Mira Bai's tortures increased further. Wild insinuations were added to her lot and persecutions at the hands of her husband's sister Uda and her brother Rana Vikramajit It was a bone of contention that she freely met the sadhus and sang *kirtan* in their company. But Mira refused to yield on this point and would not give up their company. In her poems she refers to the replies she gave on these occasions:—

(21)

"My mind is now fixed contemplating on Thee—no other thoughts distract me.

Just as the trickster is wholly intent upon his work—so am I in this Game of Love for Thee—

Many a trial I underwent as I went out to attend the company of saints—

The poisoned cup was administered to me.

It proved harmless to me when considering it the Lord's gift I drank it.

As for the great impediments in the path—modesty and the decorum of society and the fetters of family life—I threw all these aside.

Intoxicated with love of Thee, I began my dance before Thee

Laying all, both sin and virtue at Thy feet!

Says Mira! does not the world know that I am in the hands of the omnipotent Lord Girdhar?

Dare the Rana harm me with a million evil plots! Ah never." (App. Item 36).

(22)

"My mind is fixed on the Lord, no obstacle in the pursuit of the path can obstruct me.

I have met my teacher Saint Raidas, and he has conferred Realization's boon on me.

The Name has struck root in my heart, and I am ever pining for Thee.

Long since have I discarded ornaments—gold and pearls.

And only the garland of *Tulsi*-beads dangles on my bosom and I apply sandal paste to my forehead.

Attending the temple service, and meeting the saints and dancing before the Lord is my daily vocation.

I am fortunate to have the company of the saints, who are responsible for my spiritual uplift.

I am now fearless and care not for the reprimands of the Rana, my husband's elder brother.

I am the disciple of the great Teacher and through his Grace I worship Him by falling to the floor and offering obeisances.

I have thus realised Girdhar and have escaped the agony of rebirth." (App. Item 37).

(23)

"O my mother-in-law! stop me not from associating with the saints!

I am mad for deep has the name of the Lord rooted itself in me.

Why condemn me with the reprimand 'Daughter-in-law!

Why wandereth thou wailing until late in the night while the world sleepeth peacefully?'

I reply: 'the world is foolish and loves not the Lord.'

Do they not know that he who loves the Lord knows no sleep?

The *chatak* does not taste the rain-water collected in the pools.

It pines, suffers and waits to allay its thirst only with the drops of nectar falling during a definite arrangement of the constellations.

Lord bestow Thy vision on me. I am tired of the world. Make me Thine." (App. Item 38).

(24)

"Without my Beloved the house is turned to a veritable prison.

When the Beloved dwelleth in foreign lands, what availeth it to light the lamp to remove darkness?

My bed without my consort is like unto prison.

Wailing and pining I pass my hours and my days.

Long I have stood waiting for Thee, my Divine Beloved.

Day and night I am tortured by the pang of separation.

How can I describe my suffering in words?

If you could only know how my heart aches for the vision of my sweet Lord.

Tell me, can anyone be found, who might bring me a message from my Beloved?

Happy and auspicious will be the moment,

When the Lord will take me in His embrace

And knitted in love I shall sing songs of the spring." (App. Item 39).

(25)

"When I have the beneficent shelter of the Lord over my head, I have no fear and I care not for your threats—O Rana!

You say that I should give up the company of the saints since my companions feel shy amongst them;

I answer that the saints are like unto my parents, O Rana, why then do the *sakhis* feel shy in their company?

In his anger the Rana had served to me a cup of poison, I drank it off cheerfully and it was turned to nectar.

He then raised an army and assailed me.

It was a strange array—the forces of Rana on one side and Mira alone on the other.

Yet, Mira donning the armour of Love for the Lord and of Patience and armed with harmlessness and piety,

Easily secured a victory over those soldiers of tyranny." (App. Item 40).

(26)

"Weeping for Thee my eyes are turned red.

My nights and days are passed in singing Thy praises.

My eyes are set on no other sight but Thee.

I am decided to win Thee over, O my Love!

All day long I contemplate and serve no other, cherishing Thy Lotus Feet, as on a pedestal, in my heart.

Thus I pass my time, bathing in the Ganges and Jamuna of meeting and separation." (App. Item 41).

(27)

"Ignominy and shame and the scandal of the world I cherish and welcome for Lord's Love—O Rana.

I care neither for the disgrace nor for the applause of this world—for my spiritual path is different from that of the world.

With great difficulty I gained my *Guru*. If the world condemns me for meeting him, my great preceptor,

Then, says Mira, on such people's heads may Hell fires fall." (App. Item 42).

IV

However, matters came to a climax—after Mira had been initiated by Raidas, the Saint Jacob Boehme of India. Akbar disguised as a sadhu and accompanied by the court musician Tānsen visited her and offered to her Deity Girdhar, a garland of diamonds. The incident is beautifully portrayed by Maharaja Raghuraj Singh in his *Bhaktmal* and we reproduce it here (*Ram Rasikavali* pp. 804).

"Attracted by the fame of Mira Bai, Akbar disguised as a sadhu and accompanied by Tānsen visited Mira. After a long discussion between Tansen and Mira Bai,

on the Art of Music at the humble request of Akbar, Miraji entertained him with songs composed in praise of her Girdhar. As she sang, the Lord appeared before her. Mira fainted, while Akbar enjoyed great ecstasy. Later when the King put questions on *Rajniti* (rules of Governance) to Mira she answered them so beautifully that he was astounded at her insight into secular affairs as well. Miraji rounded up the whole discussion, and surprised Akbar, when she sang:

(28)

"Observe ye, the dishevelled plaited hair of the Beloved, like unto the dark clouds, and like the drops of rain they twist and curl.

His raven hair, restless eyes, and His body put to shame the sublime similies of poets.

His beautiful dress, His gait, the redness of His feet and of His palms, His floating *pitambar*, ringlets of hair, the nails shining like lightning, all these are displayed as a glorious panorama of clouds in the rains.

Mira is a veritable sacrifice to these charms of her Girdhar." (App. Item 43).

After this meeting, Akbar regaining himself, felt his life was in danger if he was recognised in the land of his enemies, the Rajputs. Therefore, he prayed Sri Miraji for her blessing which she readily gave, thereby ensuring his safe return. She advised him to serve with faith and love the sadhus who dwelt in his kingdom and assured him it would bring prosperity to him.

As Akbar left, he presented a garland to her Lord Girdhar with the prayer "decline not this gift of the sinner in His name" and it was therefore accepted by Mira. The news of the garland reached the Rana who, hearing of it,

rushed to kill Mira for having conversed with a Moslem. But he was stunned by her ecstasy and his powerlessness, for, in her presence he found that he was deprived by some invisible Power of all his strength.

Later the Rana planned the murder of Akbar through *daivic* (supernatural) intervention. At his instance, one of his subjects, a devotee, invoked Sri Hanuman, and when the latter appeared, requested him to do harm to Akbar. As Sri Hanuman reached the king's mansion, he found his Lord Sri Rama and Laxmanji standing there to protect Akbar. He was much astonished by the Lord's reply "Son Hanuman! Akbar is protected by the blessings of our dear devotee Mira Bai." Hearing this Sri Hanuman departed.

V

When the cruelties of Rana towards her made it intolerable, Mira left Chitor, and set out on her errand of Love, for Brindaban, with an indefatigable determination beneath her holy raiment, a penniless pilgrim, accompanied (according to some authorities) with one female companion. In her poems she speaks thus of her journey:—

(29)

"Yes! let us proceed *sakhi!* to the land where we can meet our Beloved, aye to that country let us repair.

If it is necessary let us dye and don the garment of ochre, appropriate to such a meeting.

If it be required let us put a garland of pearls round the neck or like the *yogin* proceed with matted hair."

Thus Mira spoke of her decision in the hearing of her tormentor, the Rana. (App. Item 44).

and again.

(30)

"No one can deter me from my decision,

O my *sakhis!* hear me for I tell you exactly what passes in my heart.

I shall pass henceforward my time in the company of the saints and enjoy the Lord's bliss.

What matters it, if it demands the sacrifice of all property and body! my life is a sacrifice unto Him.

I shall put up with harsh words, for my mind is fixed in contemplation of Him.

O Lord Girdhar! I bow and surrender to the feet of my guru, says Mira." (App. Item 45).

Mira started, resounding the four directions with the thrilling notes of her reputed song, given below, that shall ring through eternity:—

"Merey to Girdhar Gopal dusro na koyi.
Jā ke sir mor mukat mero pati soyi.
Tat mat bhrat bandho apno na koyi.
Chanrh dayi kul ki kan ka karihey koyi.
Suntan dhig baith baith lok laj khoyi.
Chunri ke kiye tuk aurh layi loyi.
Mauti munge utar bunmala poyi.
Ansuan jul sinch sinch prem beyl boyi.
Ab to beyl phail gayi anand phal hoyi.
Dudh ki mathanyan barhe prem se biloyi.
Makhan jab karh liyo chach piye koyi.
Bhakt dekh raji hoyi jagat dekh royi.
Dasi Mira Lal Girdhar taro ab moyi."

Who can interpret this message of love? Here is the simple song which outlines the various stages of *Bhakti.* In this great poem Sri Miraji gives details of the itinerary

of the pilgrim in the path and of his experiences. Here we have the echo of the Vaishnava *sadhana* path[11] as also of Sufi Attar's *Wandering through the Seven Valleys* until the Realm of Transcendental Love is attained [1. *Talab*—(Quest), 2 *Ishq*—(Love), 3. *Maarfat*—(Enlightenment), 4. *Fana*—(death of all worldliness), 5. *Tauhid*—(Unity), 6. *Hairat*—(Amazement), 7. *Fuqrwa Fana*—(Annihilation of self)—vide *Mantaq-ut-Tair*].

The climax of Love is enunciated in the first lines of this poem. It is the highest peak where even the company of saints, so dear to Mira, must for the time be forgotten so as to allow her to make a complete surrender to her Lord and hold intimate conversation alone with Him. Mira says that to reach this unique stage, all companions must be given up and this also is advocated by the author of *Cloud of Unknowing* (pp. 18), as follows:—

"For since a naked thought of anything under God, pressing against thy will and thy witting, putteth thee further from God than thou shouldst be if it were not, and hindereth thee and maketh thee insomuch more unable to feel in experience the fruit of His love, how much trowest thou, will a thought wittingly and wilfully drawn upon thee hinder thee in thy purpose? And since the thought of any special saint or of any clean spiritual thing will hinder thee so much, how much trowest thou, will

[11] "Aadyo sradha tata sadhu sango'th bhajankriya
Tato'narth nvrittih syat tato nista ruchirastatah
Athasaktistato bhavistata premabhyudancti
Sadhkanamyam premna pradurbhavey bhavet kramah."
(*Bhaktirasamritasindhu*—Sri Rup Goswami I—II

i.e. Faith is the first step in the Path, then association with saints, then worship, then the removal of its obstacles, then singleness of purpose, then special attraction towards Him, then extreme attachment and then feeling, thereafter is born the Love which wins Radha Krishna.

the thought of any man living in this wretched life, or of any bodily or worldly thing, hinder thee and let thee in this work?"

Mira is speaking of a stage when as Vidyapati voicing the feeling of Sri Radha, would say "to enjoy the Beloved's embrace, the garment and the sandal paste on the body have become an obstacle"[12] and Mira herself later describes the experience as *mili khol tun gati.* I met my Lord Krishna, with heart and body laid bare. The unswerving exclusive (*ananya*) *atmic* (spiritual) love for Girdhar can never tolerate any other bodily or fleshly affection with anybody. It soils the body-spiritual.

Mira goes on to say God has many forms—as manifested in His various incarnations. I am sacrificed to the Krishna form of the Lord displayed in Brindaban—a form so charming as to send even cupids into ecstasy.

For His sake all relations of the body must necessarily be broken. *Gunatit* (spiritual) love cannot exist side by side with *Gunmay* (worldly affections). What does it matter if this caused criticism by the world? I rejoice in it. The company of the saints served me as a ladder to climb to the Lord. It was a tool to break down all obstacles—such as the decorum of society—and it helped me to adopt a poor man's dress, torn garments. It helped me to discard all ornaments and don only the flowers for garlands. It taught me the great secret that the Lord is to be successfully wooed by tears. Here Miraji enunciates the greatest secret told by the saints—God dwells amidst the poor, who are in tatters and in tears for Him. Tears rear the creeper of Love on which when it flowers the Lord comes to play the *bhramar*. These tears in themselves possess great soothing effect and bring

12"*Chir chandan urey har na dela*
So ab nadi giri antar bhela." (Vide—p. 243, *Chandidas Vidyapati* compiled by Bandopadhya.)

inspiration and satisfaction. They ensure success in the pursuit if once they start welling up effortlessly, incessantly and spontaneously. In traversing the path, only the company of saints is to be sought since that of the world brings hurt. Says Mira, "I discovered the great secret in uttering the NAME and adhering to this quintessence of *Shastras,* I reached my Girdhar through prayers and tears."

VI

Singing this great song Mira reached Brindaban. There she found the well-known saint of the Chaitanya School, Sri Jiva Goswami—a Vaishnava *Sannyasi*—reputed for his learning and exposition of the tenets of Vaishnavism. It was the year 1590 A.D., Mira was 43 while the saint was 58. The saints of Braj viz., Sri Rup, Santan, Sur, Kumbhan Das, Nanddas, Vithaldas, Harbansji and other reputed ones had passed away before or about the year 1589 A.D. within a year or so before Miraji's arrival in Braja. *Satsang* (association with the saints) was Mira's principal vocation, indeed her life-breath. It was for this sublime spiritual trait in her that she had suffered so much. Here she was astounded when the aged Jiva Goswami refused to grant her an interview—observing "he was a *Sannyasi* and could not see the face of a woman." Miraji astounded him by her reply, "In Brindaban, who except my Girdhar is a *purush*[13] (male)? If Sri Radha learns of your bold pre-

[13]Cf. Cardinal Newman's observation: "If thy soul is to go on to its higher spiritual blessedness it must become a woman; yes however manly thou be among men.

"It must learn to love being *dependant* and must lean on God not solely from distress or alarm but because it does not like independence or loneliness. It must not have recourse to Him merely as to a friend in need, under the strain of duty, the battering of affliction and the failure of human sympathy, but it must press towards Him when there is no need.

"They (souls) too, seem to be infinite in their cravings and who but He can satisfy them? Thus a restless instinct agitates the soul guiding it dimly to feel, that it was made for some definite unknown

tensions, you may have to quit Brindaban." The illusion in the *pandit* and his leanings towards *ashram-dharma* (*sanyasa*) were soon swept away and in an instant he learned the great secret of the Love of the Gopis—the path which even the Vedas sought in vain (*sruti mrigya-mayu—Bhagwat* X—14-34). As he knelt down at her feet Miraji lifted him up and embraced him. Of this incident the great saint Vyas of Brindaban remarks:—

relation towards God. The sense of emptiness increases to positive uneasiness, until there is an inward yearning, if not shaped in words, yet in substance not alien from that ancient strain—'as the hart panteth after water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God, I wail for the Lord, my soul doth wait as those that watch for the morning.' But by the continuance of such exercises, the fervency of the desire gradually ripens into love and love goes on heightening till at last the soul becomes conscious of it.

"In claiming a personal relation with God, nothing exclusive is intended, nay, he who thus learns that he is loved by God, learns simultaneously that all other men and creatures are also loved (though a hateful dogma may here mar his soul's instinct.) That is an important lesson for man's external action; indeed it is a foundation of Universal love in the soul; but the inward movements towards God proceed exactly as if there were no other creature beside itself in the universe. Thus the discovery that it loves and is loved in turn produces sensible joy, in some natures, very powerful, in all imparting cheerfulness, hope, vivacity. The personal relation sought is discerned and felt. The soul understands and knows that God is her God, dwelling with her more closely than any creature can, yea neither stars, nor sea nor smiling Nature hold God so intimately as the bosom of the soul.

"What is He to it? What but the soul of the soul. It no longer seems profane to say, 'God is my bosom friend. God is for me and I am for Him.'

"So joy bursts out into praise and all things look brilliant, and hardship seems easy and duty becomes a delight; contempt is not felt and every morsel of bread is sweet. Though we know that the physical universe has fixed unaltering laws, we cannot help seeing God's hand in events. Whatever happens we think of as His mercies. His kindness or His visitations and His chastisements; everything comes to us from His love; thus the whole world is fresh to us with sweetness, before untasted. All things are ours whether afflictions or pleasure, health or pain. Old things have passed away; behold! all things are become new and the soul wanders and admires and gives thanks, and exults like the child on

"*Mirabai binu ko bhaktan pita jan ur layo.*" "Who, but Mira Bai, embraced the saints as her parents?"

Then followed days and nights of *Satsang*. Jiva Goswami and other saints recognized her as a Gopi who

a summer's day—and understands that she is a new-born child. She has undergone a new birth! It is not a birth of the flesh, but a birth of the spirit—birth into a heavenly union—birth into the family of God. Why need she scruple to say, that she is partaker of the divine nature, if God loves her and dwells in her bosom?

"The single thought, 'God is for my soul and my soul is for Him' suffices to fill a universe of feeling and gives rise to a hundred metaphors. Spiritual persons have exhausted human relationships in the vain attempt to express their full sense of what God is to them. Father, brother, friend, king, master, guide, shepherd are common titles. But what has been said, will show why a still tenderer tie has ordinarily presented itself to the Christian imagination as a very appropriate metaphor—that of marriage. The habit of breathing to God our most secret hopes, sorrows, complaints and wishes in unheard whisper with the consciousness that he is always inseparable from our being perhaps pressed this comparison forward.

"They (souls) thus undergo a spiritual marriage. We have seen the longings of the soul to convert God's transitory visits into an abiding and indissoluble union. It makes a covenant with God and pledges itself to Him, well-assured that he accepts the pledge.

'Not now only O my Lord' it exclaims, 'but henceforth and always,. Thou art mine and I am Thine. I have known something of Thy gloriousness and loveliness: I have loved Thee a little and this heart has been Thy dwelling place. Now do I claim that my Lord shall never go away but dwell here inseparably and eternally.'

"It is therefore very far indeed from a gratuitous phantasy to speak of this as a marriage of the soul to God. No other metaphor, in fact, will express the relationship.

"And herein lies the fundamental union of poetry and religion. Hence is it that the ancient bard, or Prophet Vates, united the characters of poet and religious teacher, for indeed to feed upon the higher and sublime poetry is an exercise of the soul, a preparation at best for pure religion. Its similarity to religious meditations is evident in many respects. As the same hymn of praise and love may be daily recited and wearies not; as no information is coveted for the understanding, likewise the same lines of the poet eternally delight, the more, perhaps, because they are old. We dwell upon each word and find the imagination more and more stimulated, it is a never ending feast; for the wise poet does not limit his hearer to his own mind but leaves room for them to rise beyond him if they can."

had come to shower on them her *kripa* which alone was the way back to *Gauloka*—the Divine Abode of The Supreme Reality, Sri Lord Radha Krishna.

Mira's advent was necessary—since the great saint of Bengal Sri Chaitanya could not fully display the *Radha-bhav,* as he was disabled, being a male and also because he had taken up sanyasa and dwelt away from Brindaban. Mira performed this office remarkably because she was a Gopi and her soft female heart embraced even the heretics and moral criminals and reclaimed them by her *upadesh* (instructions). Sri Jiva Goswami and other followers of Sri Chaitanya, not being Gopis themselves and although knowing that through the intervention of the *kripa* (grace) of the Gopis you can secure Love (*prem*)—the joy of meeting Sri Radha Krishna in the *Kunjalilas* (in the bowers of Brindaban), yet in contravention to *Gita, Bhagwata* and Vedas and without any warrant from Sri Chaitanya, started "*anugat upasna*", a subtle form of worship wherein they gave out that direct meeting in an embrace with Lord Sri Krishna for a *Kanta-bhava-jigyasu* (one who seeks to meet Krishna as a consort) is impossible. They say you can taste only the drops of joy of love between Radha Krishna that come filtering through the agency of the Gopi to whom you and your guru (who is generally a male) are *anugat* (suppliant) and this taste being divine in nature is as enjoyable as a direct meeting. (Vide F. N. Introduction—No. 10—*Chaitanya*).

Mira fought shy of this *anugat upasna,* that is this *nirguna nirakar* and *formless* enjoyment. She insisted on a direct embrace of her Girdhar. This is her *swatantra upasna*—a privilege unknown to other saints after the days of Gopis[14], but it became possible for her being a Gopi-incarnate.

[14]Except Andal—the Rangnayka (See the third Sketch, Andal, later.)

Therefore her poems composed in her fervour do not sing the *bhavas* as of these saints—because of the fundamental difference in form of *upasna*. The much criticised eroticism which is apparent in the last cantos of Jaideo's *Gita Govinda* (for which reason Edwin Arnold refused to translate them in his *The Lord's Song*) and the voluptuousness of description that is apparent in the pages of *Sri Govinda lila Amrita* and other *Kunja-lila Granths* of Gaudiya Sampradaya and is scattered here and there in the *Sri Radha Sudha Nidhi,* has no place in Mira Bai. She refuses to describe her communion with the Lord when it is carried on alone with her Krishna. Mira's poetry and descriptions are like a drawn-out wail, a yearning, a lament, a tear, a sigh, an agony of separation from the Lord which, suppressed through ages, can be held back no longer and breaks forth in her immortal songs.

In Brindaban, Mira met another great saint Haridas who founded the temple of Sri Bihariji and by his devotees is considered the incarnation of Sri Radha's Sakhi Lalita. How on meeting her and recognizing in her the Queen of the Gopis, Sri Haridas showed her round the age-old dalliance spots of Brindaban, is recorded in the famous poem by Saint Dhrudas:—

"Laj chanrh Girdhar bhaji karina kuchu kul kani
Soyi Mira jagat vidit prakat bhakti ki khani
Lalita ho layi bol ke ta son ho ati hait
Anand so nirkhat phiren Brindaban rus khet"

(*Bhakt Namavali*)

"Mira worshipped Lord Girdhar—discarding the bonds of family and its decorum.

The same Mira became world-famous for her devotion.

When Lalitaji (incarnated as St. Haridas) met her here in Brindaban;

She was shown round all the ancient dalliance spots by him."

VII

When calamity had fallen on Chitor, Miraji repaired to Dwaraka, as the Rana had come to Brindaban and insisted upon her return home to confer peace on them.

Let her songs speak of the *upadesh* she gave at Dwaraka where she lived for the long period of over 20 years and passed away at the age of 67 in the year 1614 A.D. In Gujerat she is recognised—next only to Narsi Mehta[15] as the greatest contributor to Gujarati literature:—

(31)

"Early, very early, O my Friend arrive and succour me,
I am like unto the fish, long separated from Thee,
Thou water of my life!
Confer by Thy sight nectar and save me.
Yes, I have long been separated from Thee,
Now keep me near Thee
As the *chakor* keeps her eyes on the moon and the acrobat rivets his attention on the rope.
As the ignorant man's intellect is warped by 'my and mine'
So is Mira's soul rivetted on Thee, my Lord Girdhar and in Thee I rest eternally." (App. Item 46).

[15]Sri Narsi Mehta, Tukaram, Kabir, Nagridas, Harivans, all have words of praise for Mira and the courageous incidents of her life are all confirmed by them; Says Tukaram—

"Merey bahu goti, sant au mahant nitya sumirat sarv Nam
Chokha mela sant hriday ke har kabhi na bisar Haridas
Jiva key jivan eka janardan pathak Srikanh Mirabai
Tuka kahe mota pita mere ye hi sukh rup grihi grihasrami."

i.e. Mira, Eknath.........all these saints who ever sing the Lord's Name I own as my parents and near relations........ and adds Narsi Mehta:

"Mirabai na bish amrit kidhan Vidurani arogi bhaji re
Narsian ca Swami Laxmidhar moti auth tamari re"

i.e. My adulation to Mirabai who drank the poison offered in the name of the Lord as nectar...............

(*Mira Madhuri* pp. 30, 54)

(32)

"In this two-days' existence, why raise a quarrel with anybody, but rather suffer cheerfully.

Watch the transiency. He who today sleepeth on a bed of gold,

Will tomorrow find his place amongst the dead in the cemetery.

Leaving the parents and relations you will pass away so why worry over what is inevitable?

Valiant and brave though they were, Ravana and Kumbhkarna passed away.

From the humblest creature right up to Brahma, the four-faced creator, none can escape Death's summons.

Keep your eyes fixed on the abode of Eternity—Girdhar—and contemplate Him always, advises Mira." (App. Item 47).

(33)

"Life without prayers is futile.

At your birth your mother was very happy

But, alas! you wasted your life without worship, and became burden on your mother.

Appearances do not matter—it is the essence that must be looked to.

Do you not observe that the *koil* (cuckoo) and crow are both black yet one gives pleasure with its song and the other has a shrill caw.

Foolish is the bat which dangles upside down. Do not try to emulate it by seeking to return to the mother's womb.

Sing of the Lord, says Mira, taste life's fruit, sing the Lord's songs and with Girdhar's grace safely cross the ocean of worldliness." (App. Item 48).

(34)

"A suppliant, Lord, I beg of Thee, take me up,
I have suffered much by birth into this world.
Efface the memory and trials of the world.
Remove the bondages created by my activities in lives past,
In the cycle of innumerable existences in this world I have passed through.
Lord Girdhar, save me from this cycle of transmigration, begs Mira." (App. Item 49).

(35)

"If you have become a fakir, care not what becomes of you. Remember Him continually.
It is of no concern if, one day, you drive in a caparisoned coach, dwell in palaces
And ride on elephants and on another day you tramp bare footed on the long road accepting scraps for food.
Even if you have to fast on some days and have sweetmeats on others, it matters not.
Nor whether you be on rich linen bed or the bare earth.
For Lord's sake bear with what falls to your lot, always singing of Him, says Mira." (App. Item 50).

(36)

"I repeat the name of the Lord Rama, day in and day out.
You also remember Him, likewise, and this remembrance of the name will wash away all your sins.
Aye, even the sins of past lives are all washed away and your past record erased by repeating the name.
Aye, the name is like a nectar filling a cup of gold, which none can resist the temptation to quaff.
O Lord Eternal! all my body and mind is steeped in Thy name, says Mira." (App. Item 51).

(37)

"My mind is steeped in the love of Rama's name.

For Thy sake, O Shyam, I willingly endure all ridicule.

Some seeing my intoxicated condition, style me mad, others say I am a veritable disgrace to the family.

In truth, some say, she being so steeped in Beloved's love is responsible for lighting the lamp of fame in the family.

I tell you the sword of *Bhakti* is very effective. It will cut asunder the knot of Yama's rope of Death.

Mira, beloved of Lord Girdhar is drowned in the ecstatic ocean of the World." (App. Item 52).

(38)

"I gained the priceless gift of Lord's name—and a veritable treasure it is.

The Lord conferred on me a valuable gift; the teacher owned me as his own.

I lost my material wealth sacrificing all that the world holds respectable.

But this treasure is a thing that grows day by day even by spending (repeating).

It is the life-saving boat steered by the guru as helmsman, easily taking us over the ocean of worldliness

Mira sings full of the joy of the grace and goodness of Lord Girdhar." (App. Item 53).

(39)

"My Lord! I am fascinated by Thy name,

Who can count the merits of Thy name, which could float stones on which it was inscribed?[16]

[16]Refers to bridge made by Sri Rama on His invasion of Lanka.

Though she had no good deed to her credit and on the other hand she indulged in many an evil,

Yet because she made her parrot repeat Thy Name the courtesan Ganika ascended to heavens.

Why does not one recite Thy exploits with zest, seeing that Thou answered elephant Gajendra with alacrity and force?

Thou emancipated him from the bondage of animal life when he called Thee by the name.

Even the sinner Ajamil frightened the messengers of Death and escaped their clutches, by repeating his son's name Narayan which bore a resemblance to your name.

The guru taught her the secret behind the Name, and by its help she attained to the Lotus Feet of Lord Girdhar, says Mira." (App. Item 54).

(40)

Lord! Thou, not I, hast the liberty to cut me off from Thee

But tell me first, if I break with Thee, with whom can I associate?

Thou art my shelter—as a tree, on which like a bird I rest.

Thou art a pond, in which as a fish I live.

Thou art a mountain, on which I roam as a peacock.

Thou art the moon, and I Thy *chakora* dance round Thee

Thou art the gold, I the powder rubbed to brighten Thee.

O Lord! Thou dweller of Braja—

I am Thy maid and suppliant for ever, says Mira." (App. Item 55).

(41)

"Sing of Govinda! dear Govinda! O my mind!

You have been lucky in getting in this human life an occasion to sing of Him.

It is very difficult to get a human body and its span is too short.

To attend to discourses on matters divine, is verily to have a boat in which to cross the ocean of rebirth.

Dive deep into the Ganges of the saints' company.

My abode is at the feet of the saints, therein my mind finds rest for ever, says Mira." (App. Item 56).

VIII

Before passing on from the subject of Sri Miraji's *Sadhanapaddhati* (Practices enunciated by Miraji) we should say a word about her experience in the sphere of *Shabda-marga* (*Nirguna upasna* of the Word—*shabda*. Although a born *Saguna upasak* (worshipper of Lord with form) Sri Miraji, at the behest of her *Gurudeva*—Sri Raidasji (the disciple of Swami Ramananda) practised with success for a time the worship of *Shabda* (Word)—the age-old creed propounded in the *Nadbindu Upanishad*, and greatly favoured by the saints of the Punjab, Sind, Rajasthan, especially by Guru Nanak, Kabir and the Moslem Sufis. *Shabda Marga* may be shortly stated as follows:—

All creation is the *lila* of sound (*shabda*). The beginnings are in the word—AUM. When struck by the Creator, this sound, striking against various levels of consciousness in its descent from the Supreme Eternal Abode of the Lord, to the lowest nether regions, created the 7 chakras—(plexus) with lotuses of different colours, and with their presiding deities endowed with different powers (*Siddhis*).

The *Sadhana* in this path consists in hearing this unstruck sound (*Nad* or *Anhad* or *Sarod Sarmadi*) internally, with

ears closed, eyes closed, and pressing fingers betwixt the brows and at other fixed points (centres) of the body, as initiated by the guru. Seated in a particular posture (*asana*), and contemplating on the form of the *guru*, the initiate begins by hearing the particular sound near the navel (*chakra*) first, then in the region of the heart and so on and simultaneously sees various *lilas* of the deities, as he proceeds upwards.

By following the *Shabdamarga* practices the devotee becomes an adept in developing hidden supernatural powers (*siddhis*) in himself. Miraji in the poems quoted below enumerates her experiences, when Sri Raidas took her through this path. Tulsidas, Kabir, Nanak and the Sufis all speak with fervour of their similar experiences.

Of the final experience *mukti* (emancipation)—the concept of the *Shabdamargis* (followers of *shabdamarga*)—it can be said that all their *sadhanas* consist in retracing their path backwards—with the help of the WORD—the unstruck sound—from *pravriti* (works involving outgoing energy) to *Nvritti* (working internally)—passing through the various plexus till the *Brahmrandra* (at mental level) is reached and there lost to all ego and body-consciousness the adept is drowned in the sea of *sat-chit-anand*, the formless supreme consciousness.

But they, who have for their goal the *Sakshatkar* of the Lord's form—*Saguna Swarup*, and aim at revelling in the Divine *Lilas*—the sports of Sri Radha Krishna—and finally reaching His Eternal *Gauloka* do not indulge in the practice of this *Nirguna Shabda Marga*—formless *Nirakar* worship. Generally, persons of substance only who are unable to renounce all for the sake of the Supreme experience of God-realisation, of the *Darshan* of Sri Radha Krishna, practise this form of *Shabda Marga* or *Nirakar* worship, passing a few hours in silent meditation and then again rubbing shoulders with the men and the affairs of the world.

Sri Miraji therefore bade good-bye to this *shabda-pasna* and again revelled in her devotion for Girdhar.

(42)

"O ye saints! Divine washermen—wash me clean of my sins.

Wash so well that the cycle of transmigration may be effaced from my lot.

On the *ghat* of the *sushmna* nerve, (spinal cord) with contemplation's soap and with forgiveness and peace as washing materials,

Wash my soul clean, making it pure.

This soul like unto a parrot has got itself encaged in the body.

Beware and take heed, for life is but a two-days' existence—says Mira." (App. Item 57).

(43)

"All the doors of the senses being closed how can I meet Him now?

Moreover, the path for the soul to climb, is slippery and the foot does not retain its hold on it.

I try my best to place my foot, but alas, it cannot get a grip.

O Creator! why did you construct my Beloved's palace on so high a pinnacle?

I am unable to reach the difficult spot.

Besides, at many a plexus (*chakras*) I find seated the sentinels (*Devas*) who frown and conspire against me.

I am lucky that my *Satguru* has showed me the path so that though separated from my Beloved for ages I have easily reached His Abode now, says Mira." (App. Item 58).

(44)

"I am mad with love and, who can imagine my agony?
I rest on the cross but how can I know sleep?
In the highest heavens my Lord rests! How can I meet Him?
Only he who is like me oppressed can know of my agony,
As jewellers can alone appraise jewels.
Tormented by pain I wander from one wilderness to another, and can find no doctor to administer to my ailment.
Only when Girdhar plays the physician shall I be healed, says Mira." (App. Item 59).

NOTE

In this short sketch of Mira Bai we have purposely not dealt with the three important points which are today occupying the attention of research scholars. To the first—Was Raidas Miraji's Teacher?—our answer is in the affirmative. Miraji's initiation by Raidas is a fact supported by irrefutable internal evidence, drawn from her own poems, wherein she says:—

"mera mun lago Hari jison, ub na rahongi atki
Guru milya Raidasji, dinhi jnan ki gutki."

i.e. "I obtained Raidasji as my guru who imparted knowledge to me, whereby I was initiated into the path."

and again

"Khojat phirun vaid wa ghar ko, koyi no karat bakhani
Raidas sant miley mohi satguru dini surat suhani."

"After a great search I found my Guru Raidasji who initiated me." Moreover even today the *Samadhi* of Raidasji may be seen near Miraji's Temple in the old palace

of Chitor with the portrait of Raidasji inscribed on its roof: which would have been impossible if he had not been her guru.

The second problem concerns Miraji's meeting with the Emperor Akbar and the court musician Tansen in 1568 A.D. Some scholars doubt that it took place. But it is a fact proved by reference to Growse's *Memoirs of Mathura;* the *Gazetteer of Mathura* (1909 Ed.); locally available handwritten manuscripts, *Bhaktmal* of Sri Raghuraj Singh—and finally other irrefutable circumstantial and secondary evidence.

The third question that arises is about the date of Mira Bai. I fix it as 1547 A.D. (date of birth) to (date of death) 1614 A.D. and the evidence to support this conclusion is as below:—

(*a*) Miraji met Jiva Goswamiji after his *sanyasa* (1563 A.D.) in Sri Brindaban in 1590 A.D.

(*b*) She met Swami Haridas in Brindaban (1590 A.D.).

(*c*) She worshipped in Sri Govindji Temple (Date of its construction inscribed on it is 1590 A.D.).

(*d*) She met Akbar and Tansen in Chitor much before 1590 A.D.

(*e*) She used to visit Sri Bankey Behariji Temple (constructed about 1590 A.D.).

(*f*) She met at Chitor the Vallabh Sect Saint Krishna Das.

(*g*) She met Sri Haribansji, the founder of Sri Radha Ballabhi sect at Chitor.

(*h*) And the negative evidence to be considered is that she could not find Sri Surdasji (d. 1584 A.D.) Sri Sanatan and Rup Goswamiji (d. 1557-1563 A.D.) Sri Vithal Nathji (d. 1590 A.D.) Sri

Haribansji (d. 1570 A.D.) and other saints whom she must have met if she had come before 1590 A.D. to Brindaban.

Discussion of these matters in detail has been omitted since they have been discussed by Mata Sri Krishnaji in her reputed Hindi work *Sri Braj Chandra Chakori Mira* published by Sri Radhika Library, Brindaban, this year, which is an illustrated volume of 600 pages with copious foot-notes from contemporary authors, Sufis of Islam, Christian Mystics, and great Sanskrit scholars Jaideo, Kalidas and others which throw great light on the poems recounting the experiences of Miraji. The appendices and bibliography and over 360 songs of Mira Bai (which include 150 Gujarati songs by her) add to the value of that work as a book of reference and an epitome of Vaishnavism.

Part of that work—by permission of the authoress has been translated by me for my 7th Edition of the *Story of Mira Bai* to be published shortly by the present publishers (Six Editions came out from Gita Press, Gorakhpur) for the English speaking scholars.

Readers should refer to these works, in which we have collaborated. We have given above brief, important data, which are fully discussed in *Sri Braj Chandra Chakori Mira.*

CHAPTER III

ANDAL

The Alvar Saint Styled Rangnayka

(Cir. about 400 A.D.)

"Ye wayfarer to Brindaban! Stop for a moment and convey my message to the Beloved Dweller of Braja 'When will the lotus-eyed Krishna cast a lingering ravishing glance on this hapless *dasi* (maid)?'...............

"From Brindaban cometh thou O breeze, aye wait, a while let me embrace thee for thou carriest the perfume of His body[1]"..................

[1]These originals are in Sanskrit. Compare Jaideo and the Bengali poet Gyan Das who borrow the same idea—a little modified in their well-known lines:—

"nam sametam krit sanketam vadayate mridu venum
Bahu manute tanute tanu sanga pavan chalit mapi renum."

(*Gita Govinda* Canto V—9)

"Listen, low and on His reed there
Softly sounds Thy Name,
Making even the mute things plead there
For His hope; 'tis shame,
That while winds are welcome to Him,
If from Thee they blow,
Mournful ever by the river
Krishna waits thee so"

—translated by Sir Edwin Arnold

and Gyan Das sings:—

"Amar anger varan saurabh jekhen jekhen je dige paye
Bahu pasarya bawul haiya takhan se dige jaye"



ANDAL   Sketch: *R. Rawal*

and "Ye cuckoo! why do you sit mute or just moaning like me on this *Kadamba* tree? Come down pray *Sakhi!* Let us sit together, in each other's embrace and sing songs to our fair Divine Beloved........ Ah no! I can interpret your silence, you feel that I am not your compeer, not an equal. Then enter my heart. Confer on me the blessings of the pang of separation and teach me the plaintive wail, a dirge

He rushes like a mad lover, with arms spread to embrace the very directions, whither blows the wind touching my body, to catch the perfume thereof. Whilst Rai Shekar sings with marvellous beauty—of these mercy-bestowing acts of the Lord Krishna thus:

"Sakhi! pirit piya se jane.
Je dekhi Je suni chitey anumani
nichani diye parane.

Mo yadi 'snan agilya ghate
Pichala ghate se nhai
Mor ange jal paras lagiya
Baho pasariya dhaye.

Vasne vasan lagive lagiya
Ekey rajke de
Mor namer adh akhar payile
Harash hayia le.

Chayay chayay lagiv lagiya
Phirey katek pake
Amar anger vatas je dige
Se mukhe se din thake

Maner akuti vekat karite
kat na sandhan jane
Payer sevak Rai Shekar
kichu bujhe anumane."

"Who can gauge Krishna's love for me?" sings Radha. 'He bathes in the ghat below the place where I bathe so that the waters after touching my body should touch Him. He gives His clothes to the same washerman who serves me in the hope that His clothes will touch mine. He rushes behind me to cover my shadow with His as I move along. Who can imagine the love of Krishna for me who runs as a maniac to embrace the wind as it comes from where I am roaming?'

——— Quoted from the Bengali work—

Chandidas & Vidyapati—compiled by C. C. Bandopadhya & Harikrishna Mukhopadya p. 126/129.

that can draw Him to me............O dear! for heaven's sake, do not be sullen! I cannot bear to see thee in pain."

A YOUNG beautiful girl—Andal—still in her teens, seated by a pond surrounded by *tulsi* plants and creepers and smiling flower-laden plants, was thus addressing the sky, or at times, the bird on a nearby tree and at times, a chance unconcerned traveller passing that way little understanding her communing. Frequently she would rush to follow a shadow cast by a passing cloud, mistaking it for the flute-player Krishna running away from her—How her heart would sink at its disappearance! Andal's agony and plaint remind us of Sri Radha's lament, so beautifully portrayed by the Assamese poet Krishna Kamal (whose verses have been translated, in part, into Russian and English (vide Introduction in *Krishna Kamal Gita Kavya* compiled by K. K. Goswami) thus:—

(The sight of dark-water-laden cloud inspire her with the thought of her dark-complexioned One, Krishna)—says Sri Radha:—

"O! Thou imparter of life to the Gopis! welcome.

In time hast Thou come and checked the escaping breath of the Gopis.

Only Thy sight hath saved me.

But I ask, why remaineth Thou at a distance?

Come near, and once again repair to the flower-laden bowers.

Once near us Thou shalt know how much life Thou hath given to us by appearing before us!

We are completely at the mercy of Thy bounty, that hath brought Thee thus near.

Else in separation from Thee all of us to *Yama's* land would have gone.

Dost Thou not know this?

A hundred like us are sacrificed to Thee.

But Thou art One to us all,

Like unto the sun—One to million of lotuses.

Dost Thou not know how we pined and could not endure

Thy separation even for the moment, for the falling of an eye?

Be that as it may—the past must be forgotten.

Thou hast come—Separation's pain hath left us.

Why now repeat the painful tale of yore?

Now Thy Lotus Feet I shall cherish in my heart,

They shall do away with all my troubles.

Fear not that my burning heart shall injure Thy soft feet

For know they are cooler than the coolness of a million moons.

One touch—and all shall be cool and sweet.

(As the cloud is seen floating away, Radha pines):

O my co-mates! rush and catch Him

He my heart's Torturer is escaping away......

(As He swiftly departs, Radha cries:)

Sakhi! Gone! ah, He is gone away! Shyama has left me.

Alack! ye could not hold Him fast. Ye could not stay Him longer here.

He is not gone alone. With Him my breath is also gone.

Departed is my Consort! and yet this life still persists.

I cannot say why I live when there is nothing to enjoy at His departure?

Sakhis! better now for me to give up life for what else is there to do?

If the Creator, had bestowed wings on me,
I should have flown to my Beloved,
And no more suffered agony's pain.
(Once again looking up to the cloud says Radha:)
Tarry awhile! it doth not behove Thee thus to part without bidding farewell, pray stay awhile.

Never surely, is the totally surrendered soul thus to be cast aside and neglected and discarded........

Yes! by all means go!

But only hear a word or two from the lips of this unfortunate forsaken Radha!

I do not worry—though death be the consequence of this parting.

But it shall lay a blot on Love's fair face.
Every one will hesitate to love Thee, Shyama,
When they see even Radha's disinterested love is
Thus thwarted by Thee.

Love which is like unto fire of untarnished bright gold shall be soiled

And none will wish to wear it as a garland any more.
....

Awhile—tarry—Dear One—

Watch how Thy Radha sacrifices for Thee her life—
Shyama! Shyama! Shyama!........"[2]

[For text of this song see Appendix Item 60]

I would not enlarge the Foot Note by further quoting from *Hans Dut (Swan-Messenger)* of Sri Rup Goswami and Kalidas' *Megh Dut (Cloud-Messenger)*, but for relevant portions the reader should see *Sri Braj Chandra Chakori,* Introduction, p. 23 onwards.

[2]One is reminded of similar *lilas* sung by other poets of Bengal and Braja, of which we quote a few.

Andal's days and nights passed in such musings, frantic displays of emotion and heart-piercing shrieks. And it could not be otherwise, for who does not know her antecedents and her previous life? Was she not the consort, of Lord Narayana, and did she not dwell with her Eternal

(1)

'Who art thou, that calleth aloud in this wilderness the Name of my Beloved Shyama as I—Sri Radha—do?

Ah! you sound like the helpless friendless Radha, crying for her dear One, Madhav!

Oh meet me, aye without reserve—there is nothing unusual in your behaviour—for are not all of us thus bound in Krishna's love-knot?

I now follow, aye! you are an echo!

O sweet One! dwelling in the solitude.

Always steeped in Love of Him

O' Thou Formless One, who does not recognise Thee.

Weeping like Radha! for the Dear One.

I know it full well, dearly do you covet my Shyama, who is beautiful as the new water-laden cloud.

Yes, you have learnt this lesson from Shyama—

As He would come playing my name—on the flute—Radha! Radha!

You also then learnt it as the forest, and these valleys resound with the name Radha, Radha—dear One.

(For text vide App. Item 61).

(2)

Very soft thy form—O river!

Why do you murmur so low—why not speak your plight to Me

Does your heart pine for thy beloved the sea? why then hide thy ailment from Radha?

Speak without reserve—O dear One!

Of the secret love that dwells in thy heart.

Make it known to Radha!

Do you not recognise an ailing and pining companion for Thee—Sri Radha?

(For text vide App. Item 62).

Bridegroom in Vaikuntha? And did she not worship Him on her incarnation into this world by performing the *Katy yani Brat* (fasting and penance as did the Gopis) to woo Him in this present life?

As to her incarnation I narrate below the well-known South Indian tradition:—

(3)

O thou consort of the peacock! why sitteth thou alone on the branches?

Because thou hast not seen Shyama, dost thou lament for Him?

True! for who is there who does not like Radha's consort?

Who is there, who does not apply the balm of the sight of Him to her heart's wound, suffered in separation.

Come to my side O bird! let us sit arm in arm, side by side;

And call our Beloved,

Thou yearneth for the dark-blue-water-laden cloud!

And I for the dark-complexioned grace-laden Shyama!
Come close, O friend of my heart!

To this effect sings Surdas.

(For text vide App. Item 63).

(4)

My friend says Sri Radha!—the *chatak* bird injects new life into Me.

As I pine at dead of night—and cry 'Beloved'—'Beloved' she repeateth.

Very sweet is her note—sweeter still the agony of love she cherisheth in the heart yet expresseth it not fully.

Oh! well does she dispense nectar to the pining ones!

If these birds had not been companions in My loneliness much would I have suffered.

Blessed are they who thus soften the agony of others, sings Surdas.

(For text vide App. Item 64).

'Asyeshansanahi jagat Vishunpatni sanatni
Sa kadacid jaganmata vedajya Vishnuballabha.
Nirhetuk daya vesad pasyad' khlam jagad
Apar bhav varasi nimagnan bhrasdukhtan—
Badh jivaniman pasya lilayam samdarsan
Yadi dattatvyanojya loksanrakonemam
Lilayamavtiryaham nityeretessaheswarah.
Twadanghripadmabhimukhan karisye tvatkatakshtah
Badhjivaniman sarvan twadajya paripalina.'

(*Sri Godambabratotssava Padavali*)[3]

When the spread of irreligious atmosphere pained the saints and they prayed for Divine interference, their agonies reached Sri Laxmi, and Her soft heart was moved. She said to Lord Narayana 'Dear One! do you not see how our children are suffering at the hands of *maya* (Illusion) and its creatures? Pray, permit Me to become incarnate with My companion *Sakhis* dwelling here, so that I shall be able to console your devotees on earth. I shall be able to lead them from the depths of suffering and bring them to your Lotus Feet, the Abode of Peace and Serenity'.

That Her soft heart should be touched by the agony of Her children is no matter of surprise! When so much affection is conferred even by the birds and beasts on their children, it is to be considered but natural that She would be affected by the afflictions of Her children suffering in the world.

Tradition has it that the Supreme Mother Sri Laxmiji was thereafter born as ANDAL—the daughter of Earth under unique circumstances. She was discovered by the Great Alvar Saint—Sri Vishnuchit Swami underneath a *Tulsi* plant in his garden. He was ordered in dream by Lord Sri Rangnath (Sri Rama) to tend as his daughter the

3*Sri Godambabratotssava Padavali*—Shridhar Acharya—p. 8 (Introduction).

new child who was His consort. The Lord's behests were observed. The child was nurtured in the spiritual and affectionate atmosphere of Love. From her childhood she never pronounced any name other than that of 'Vishnu' and she delighted to hear it recited and sung by others.

Her father's daily practice was to offer a garland in the Temple to the Lord. One day—when he offered the garland to the *Pujari,* Sri Bhat Nathji, the latter observed a lady's hair amongst the flowers and returned it as unfit. Sri Vishnuchit Swami was much dejected and surprised. He however later learnt that his daughter Andal daily donned the garland before sending it to the Temple to the Lord. She used to put it on standing before the mirror and saying "Lord, do I look beautiful donning this?" Then she took it off and placed it back in its original place. The father reprimanded the child for this practice. In the night, as Andal was lying downcast over the incident, the Lord appeared in dream to both the *Pujari* and Vishnuchitswami telling them, "I love only those garlands which are first donned by Andal and thereafter offered to Me. I shall have none besides." Both woke up delighted at the fortune of little Andal.

Days passed and with it the pain of separation from the Lord increased in Andal. The Lord in a dream again appeared to the Temple authorities as also to Vishnuchit Swami and ordered them to bring Andal to Him with due ceremony as He wished to marry Her. Early in the morning a great marriage procession proceeded to the Temple. Andal was filled with great emotion on the occasion. As she entered the Temple in ecstasy and proceeded toward the idol of Sri Rangnathji, a great light issued therefrom, shedding lustre all about, and encircled Andal. As she reached the bed of Sri Rangnathji she suddenly disappeared from human eyes and melted her form into that of the Lord. Who can sing of the glory of the marriage of

Andal to Lord? The ceremony of marriage as also Her penance for a month are still observed to please the Lord in the Vaishnava Temples of India.

Andal is the most renowned of the South Indian Alvar (Vaishnava) saints. Let us close the sketch by paying our homage to her in the words with which she is greeted by the devotees in South India:—

"Karkate purv phalgunyam tulsikananodbhavam
Pandye visvambharam Godam vande Sri Rang-naykam."

To the consort of the Lord born in Villiputtur (Dist. Ramnad S.I.)—the most famous among the two reputed female Vaishnava saints—Avvaiyar, Karakal Ammayar, and the three female Shaiva Nayanar saints of South India —Punithavati, Mangayarkarshi and Tilakvatiyar, we offer our obeisances.[4]

Most thrilling, filled with emotion, surpassing in literary merit and extremely musical are her Songs of Separation styled—*Tiruppavai*—which are sung with fervour even to this day in India.

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[4] A great Drama *'Amuktya Malydam'* was written in 16th Century A.D. by Raja Krishna Dev Ray of Vijaynagar about this great saint Andal, also called Sri Godaji.

Chapter IV

JAIDEO

The Singer of the Lord's Song

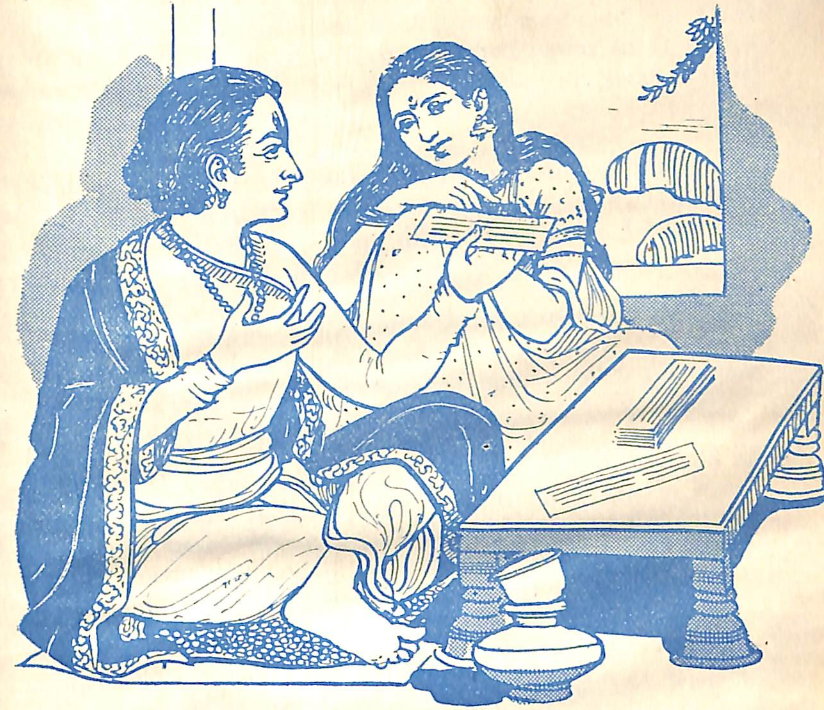
So long as Sanskrit language lives Jaideo's name shall flourish. In the Temple of Love his name is written in divine letters for all time. He was a great singer and a poet, but above all a saint whose devotion for Sri Radha Krishna and whose renunciation, shed indelible lustre on the canvas of time and spread a fragrance which even lures the Lord to play the *bhramar* on the elegant bouquet offered by Sri Jaideo Ji in the form of the great song, *Sri Gita Govinda.*

Two incidents touching the greatness of this work are well known:—

Once when a gardener's daughter was singing the following lines from *Gita Govinda*:—

> *"Rati sukh sarey gatmabhisarey madan manohar vesam—*
> *Na kuru nitambini gaman vilamban manusartam hrdyesam.*
> *Dhiray samirey yamuna tirey vasati vane Banmali*
> *Gopi pin payodhar murdan chanchal kar yug sali."*

"Dear Lady Radha! by the side of the blue Jamuna, Krishna once again waits to enjoy Thy kiss that same kiss which first taught Him the lesson of Highest Love. He waits to slake His soul's thirst, O draw nearer to Him—on whose lips is Radha's name, in whose heart is Radha's love. Make His cheerless melancholy heart bud into blossom in the fragrant draught of love. Pray tarry no



JAIDEO Sketch: *R. Rawal*

longer............" The sweet melody of the lines made the Lord Jagannath leave the temple and follow the gardener's daughter as she sang the lines, into the brinjal-field. Only when the song was completed did He return, all His garments torn in His ecstatic march through the field of thorns. Since then, at the instruction of the Lord given in a dream to the Raja of Puri, even to this day before the Lord goes to bed in the temple, this song is sung before Him.

And it could not be otherwise; for was not a line of the *Gita Govinda* actually composed by the Lord Himself? How this came about is very interesting. As Jaideo was writing the poem, the line came to his mind—

> *"Smar garal khandnam mam sirasi mandnam dehi pad pallavam udaram*
> *Jwalati mayi daruno madan kadananalo harat tad uphit vikaram."*

"O Radhe! Cupid's arrow has entered My heart, and at this time you are *manni* (angry one), so I am in great difficulty. I bend My head, bow before you and entreat you to be reconciled and place your feet on My head that I may be saved from the arrogance of the God of Love."

Simultaneously came the thought in his mind, "How can I write thus about my Lord?" He stopped and went to take his bath. In the meantime the Lord appeared dressed as Jaideo and completed the lines even accepting some food from the hands of his wife. This is not unusual with the Lord—who is reputed for His love towards the devotees; as he Himself says:—

> *"Samoham sarvbhutesu na me dvesho 'sti na priyah*
> *ye bhajanti to mam bhaktya mayi te tesu cha pyaham"*

(*Gita* IX—29)

"To all I am alike—but sweet to My devotees; because they worship Me so unswervingly that I offer Myself to them"

and in the *Bhagwat* (IX—4-63, 68) the Lord says:—

> *"Aham bhakt paradhino hiswatantraiva dwij*
> *Sadhu bhirgrast hrdyo bhakter bhakt jan priya......*
> *Sadhurvo hrdyam mahyam sadhunam hrdyam tvaham*
> *Madanyate na jananti nohem tebhyo managapi."*

"I am subservient to the will of the devotees and not free as you may think. I am bound by the bonds of their love. They hold Me, their Beloved, a prisoner in their heart. I dwell in the heart of the devotees and they dwell in Mine. They love Me so much that they know none besides Me and I reciprocate their sentiment in as much as I know none besides them." It is this nature and attribute of the Lord known to the saints all over the world that has made them forsake all to embrace Him. To quote a few of the feelings expressed by them:—

"Will He forget the poor because of their poverty or remember the rich because of their riches"—remarked Rabia, the moslem lady saint, when she was offered pecuniary help by a rich man; and refusing it, added, "Verily I should be ashamed to ask for worldly things from Him to whom the world belongs, and why should I ask from those to whom it does not belong?...... Shall He not, Who provides for those who revile Him, provide for those who love Him?...... My concern is to accommodate myself to His will. He has made me to be occupied with other than the tangible things which you see...... Who is it that wills it that I suffer? Is it not God who wills it? Then if you know this, why do you bid me ask for what is contrary to His will? It is not well to oppose one's Beloved......O Lord! if I worship Thee for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell and if I worship Thee from hope of Paradise exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for

Thy own sake, then withhold not from Me Thy eternal beauty.......Contemplation of the Maker has turned me away from contemplating on His creation and creatures. ......His love hath filled every pore of my body, I have no space left to love Muhammad ever or to hate Satan."[1]

The same feeling is voiced by other reputed Sufis:—

When Abraham Adham—who was at one time the King of Balkh (before he renounced it to become a fakir) was offered 10,000 dinars, he observed, "wouldst thou for such a sum of money erase my name from the register of Dervishes?" and he preached:—

"Three veils must be removed from the Pilgrim's heart before the Door of Happiness is opened to him. The first is covetousness, so that if the dominion of both worlds be offered to him as an eternal gift he should not rejoice[2], since whosoever rejoiceth on account of any created thing is still covetous, and 'the covetous man is debarred' (from the knowledge of God). The second veil is wrath, so that should he possess the dominion of both the worlds, and should it be taken from him, he should not sorrow because of his impoverishment, for this is the sign of wrath, 'and he who is in wrath is tormented.' The third is meanness of spirit, in that he should not be beguiled by any praise or favour, for whoever is so beguiled is of mean spirit, and such a one is veiled from the Truth: the Pilgrim must be high-minded." (*Literary History of Persia* Vol. I—p. 425).

[1]Vide *Rabia, the Mystic,* by Margaret Smith.

[2]Tribhuvan vibhav hetvey 'pi kunth smriti rajetatmouradibhirmrigyat.

Na Chalati Bhagwat padarbindat lavnimisarthamapiyah sa Vaisnavagrya.

i.e. He is a Saint, who, if the wealth of the three worlds was offered as the price of forgetting the Lord for a moment, would refuse to touch the wretched bargain. (*Bhagwat* XI —2—53).

Jaideo conversant with this supreme nature of Krishna, had willingly chosen poverty as his bride. He was originally a *paramhamsa* who was so strict in his renunciation, that he would not stay for more than a night even under a tree let alone the building of a cottage for himself. But the Lord wished to propagate through him the cult of *Bhakti*. He was therefore married by the Lord's command, but never led the usual conjugal life. His wife Sri Padmavati was really a companion in worship, and he accepted her only as a partaker in his worship. She used to dance, as he repeated the lines of *Gita Govinda* before Lord Sri Radha Madhava.

Although Jaideo was patronised by the Rajas, he always eschewed their company to teach to the spiritual world the truth of the saying of the Seers[3]—

> "When the Dervish frequents the rich, know that he is a hypocrite; but when he frequents kings, know that he is a thief.
>
> Glory be to that God who slays our children and takes away our wealth and whom, withal, we love." (Fariduddin Attar).

He always remained poor.

His remarkable *Gita Govinda* is full of eroticism—and it could not be otherwise, as it portrays the cream and most secret *Ras* (spiritual feeling) of Sri Radha Krishna's love, and sings of the *Ras Lila* and the divine acts before and after the Dalliance scene. This eroticism is really for the highest spiritual adepts who have no body-consciousness left. Lest it be dragged into the mire and misused by the common worldly minded sensual beings, Jaideo at the outset of his Lord's Song warns the reader:—

[3]Quoted in the *Literary History of Persia* Vol. I, p. 426.

"Yadi Hari smarne sarsam manah
Yadi vilaskalasu kutuhalam
Madhur komal kant padavali
Srnu tada Jaideo saraswatim."

"If thy heart is steeped in contemplation and softened by the remembrance of Hari, and you are possessed by the insatiable desire to hear of His supreme and transcendental deeds and of the pure dalliance dances which He enjoyed with His devotees (the Gopis of Braja)—then with faith and purity of body, mind and heart hear thou this poem of Jaideo."

We now give the gist of that great poem running into 12 cantos and containing over 300 *shlokas:*—The theme is a *Ras-Lila* of the Lord Sri Krishna and Sri Radha in the sylvan surroundings of Brindaban in the month of the Spring (*Basant*). The subject is based on the detailed treatment of the incident in the *Garga Samhita,* but enriched by the poet's personal experiences and made more charming and popular.

We now narrate the outline of that great work summarising a few of the incidents in it:—

The sky is clouded. The multi-hued clouds hang low in clusters like unto the *Tamal* boughs.

The scene frightens the child Krishna resting in the laps of His father Nanda—the Ruler of Braja.

Sri Radha appears on the scene at that moment and, entreated by Sri Nanda, takes Krishna home.

The light that is Sri Radha brightens the path that Krishna treads.

Arm in arm, in love's embrace—They go, tasting the nectarean drops flowing from the divine lips of the Couple Divine, to the bowers (*Kunjas*) that lie near King Nanda's home........."

All this is Divine Lila. Krishna has left the Divine ternal Vaikuntha (*Gauloka*) where He enjoys eternal y unalloyed with pang of separation with Sri Radha, lis consort, and incarnated to taste the drops of nectar ollowing the meeting with Beloved Radha and the bitter raughts of the poison of separation from Her, which is ossible only in this land of opposite *bhavas*—the world, uled by Time (*Kal*). Who can gauge my Master's ways?

......As He proceeds with Sri Radha today He fears the clouds—He of the dark hue, who one day did the hero's work for the Devas!

> Did He not play the strong Fish God—and rescue the Vedas
>
> Again the Tortoise God—and saved the world from extinction.
>
> Sometimes He played the Boar God—to carry the world on His tusk bright like the crescent
>
> A very Narsingh—half lion half man to save His dear devotee—Prahlad!......."

Many are His incarnations! and today He the life of Braja, the lustre of all gaze, woos all hearts with His flashing *pitambar,* the majesty of His demeanour, and scattering beauty all round proceeds to the banks of Jamuna with flashing glances. Praise to Lord Krishna—cynosure of Radha's eyes.......

The scene is laid in the beautiful sylvan surroundings of Brindaban, aye! and in the spring time, when blows the weet *Malaya* breeze, fragrant with the perfume stolen rom the clove-groves and sweet flowing creepers. Bees um, while the jungle is ablaze with the red-*bakul* flowers, nd variegated coloured lotuses add to the lustre of the cene. The *Kokil's* music reverberates. The Gopis at the istance pine and sigh, while the jasmine-bosomed Radha

awaits His embrace, thrilling with the surrenders of love of Sri Krishna.

The glory of the scene dazzles cupid's eyes. Who can then live alone without Him by her side? Sri Radha pines for Krishnaji. In wasted nights, passions smother, the winds sigh. So Radha wails, a sigh stealing away now and then as she asks where tarries her Beloved? "Play the messenger, ye *Kokil!* Come sit by my side and again say *Pi—Pi* (Beloved—My Beloved)! Thy words uttered in separation bring solace. My soul! You play the news-bearer to my Beloved. Go, ask Him how long should Radha suffer thus?"

The *sakhis*—sweet co-mates of Radha—must succour Her. Time must be whiled away in weaving forest-flowers to decorate Krishna by sweet damsels surrounding Sri Radha—a brilliant star-like company seated, round the moon-faced queen of Krishna's heart—Radha.

Radha's wistful eyes search for her Beloved who still tarries!

And there on the other side the forest is Sri Krishna hurrying to give an embrace to the zephyr, coming in the direction where sits Radha. His heavy heart sighs "Lucky art thou O wind! for having embraced Radha! Luckless I am seated here pining for Her."

And Radha—like a maniac, chiding Her heaving bosom, and tossing hair for rashly speaking their emotions and the silvery bangles that restlessly chime at the prospect of the approaching meeting with Krishna!

And Radha moans, and amidst Her sighs Her words escape "When will my patient glances be answered by His glances—a kiss by kiss—an embrace by embrace—Ah! when shall it be my lot?"

Heavenly love amidst earthly lovers—songs and caresses tangled in the tresses of both—eyes believing and disbelieving in the glances given as they pass bruised through the thorny thickets—that lie between the two Great Divine lovers—Radha and Krishna!

Master of love! Consider by Thy beauty[4], the vanity of cupid! and yet Thy humility that with Thy Eternal Consort Thou incarnateth to dwell amongst meek human creatures—and maketh Love sweet when it holds its feast amidst earthly surroundings.

[4]Sri Krishna's love is very tantalising, wherever in whatever clime and at whatever time the Supreme Deity casts His net. Thus sing the Sufis in Arabia and Persia of the beauty of His form and its effect on lovers:—

> Six things there be which have their home in the midst of Thy raven hair
> Twist and tangle. curl and knot, ringlet and love-lock fair
> Six things there be, as you may see which in my heart do reign,
> Grief and desire and sorrow dire, longing and passion and pain. (Awfi).

(2)

> My love is kindled in thinking of Thee
> And passionate thrills through my being do dart.
> No limb of my body but speaks of Thy love
> Each limb Thou would'st think was turned a heart.
>
> (Ath—Tha—Libi).

(3)

> Never for my heart did I comfort or pleasure or peace obtain,
> Wherefore indeed I should seek them prepared as I was for pain.
>
> I mounted the steed of perilous quest, and wonder is mine
> At him who hopeth in hazardous pathways safety to gain.
> 'Tis as though I were caught in waves which toss me about;
> Now up, now down, now down, now up in the perilous main.
> There burns a fire in my vitals, there dwells a grief in my heart;
>
> Summon my eyes to witness, for my tears witness plain.

To teach love! To learn love! To impart love! To greet love—amidst phantom surroundings—you come! Pain in pleasure—joy in heavy journeys—gain in loss, gladness and mirth in pining—glorious Guide—faultless Teacher—are love's phases you describe—"Who can interpret the Great Message of Love you impart?"

The poet proceeds with his narrative; "approaches Sri Radha and entreats Her *Sakhis* to convey the message to Krishnaji of Her plight, Her sorrowful pathetic sighs." The poet weaves into a myriad coloured garland Her words and sings them thus:

(1)

"My dear *Sakhis!* where is the Graceful Dancer! donning the peacock crown, wrapped in the lightning-like pitambar —playing the flute, where tarrieth He—Whose nectar-laden lips must be quenching the thirst of some pining Gopis—Whose glances, rich with the sweet messages of love must be playing the prodigal amidst sylvan surroundings?

O Krishna! come with all haste to place me in the Paradise of Thy arms—woo my slender and tender pining heart and soothe my aching bosom. Bathe me in the fragrance of Thy blossoming laughter!

How long am I to pass these heavy hours waiting? Bloom in the dark caverns of my heart—like the full-moon. Bathe me in the celestial nectarean floods of Thy glances. Ah! how sweet Thou, dear One! Delight of My Life!

(4)

If such be the beauty of His eye-brows and glory of His eyes and such His blandishments.

Adieu my fasts and vigils, and good-bye my intellect and discrimination (I am a sacrifice and a surrender to Him). (Browne's *Literary History of Persia* Vol. I p. 433 onwards).

Come! for I love Thee, Beloved! Tarry not then any longer! O! My soul! O! My Krishna! Lest I feel, I am forsaken and in agony bid adieu to the struggling breath! Aye come, sing to me the lovely song of Love. Take my hand in Thine—press it. It will soothe my ailing Soul.

The very angels halt in the sky and join me in my laments. Lest they chasten Thee, O! Great Lover, Benevolent Lord! Come to Thine Radha!"

"Yea! *Sakhis!* Convey my message to my Beloved! But blame Him not. My soul, my love, my tenderness are all surrender at His Feet. Beseech Him—but be not harsh to Him. Tell Him I wait for Him with arms outstretched to love Him and to be loved by Him!

Darlings Mine! Go and bring Him here. Beseech Him. Tell Him, Radha's spirit seeks Him in vain in the wilderness. Come Dear One! Succour her and startle her by Thy quiet approach.

Sakhis! Wound not my Love, my love is my strength. For my love is sweet Krishna and He is the breath of my Life.

Thus does He teach us the great lesson of love—the anguish of the soul that precedes the great and glorious meeting.

(Then in ecstasy beyond all body-consciousness, continues Sri Radha).

Not a mere phantom, *Sakhis!* I see Him come to me, sweet with beseeching glances, making amends, in sad solemn pensive mood.

Wonderful pity shines in my face at His plight as He approaches me. My fair face glows up and I can hold out no longer. I cannot bear to see my heart so sad. I must give my embrace, lo! where is He gone. . . . (a little later)

ah! I saw a mere phantom. O! *Sakhis!* was it not the Lord of my heart? Oh! where is He gone? Was it a mere dream I saw?"

(For text See Appendix Item 65)

The poet next sings the plight of Sri Krishna on the other side. Krishna! who loves like His lovers, pants, sighs, pines and chides His loitering nature for remaining away from sweet Radha! from the enchantress Radha, the Queen of His heart:—

(2)

"Gone! Lost—because I was beguiled by my heart to seek joy elsewhere! How you are suffering! Faint! Despairing! Lonely Radha! how dare I, a culprit now, approach Thee and seek amends!

I wronged Thee Darling and tested Thy patience too far! I have vexed Thee. My life in love, in a perpetual dance amongst cymbals, chiming *vinas,* singing new songs is now turned into a dream! The fault is Mine, I have destroyed what was real joy to Me.

I hear the woods echo with Thy sighs, sob with Thy tears, and heave with Thy bosom.

I feel shame over these wasted hours passed in separation from Thee! Ah! I have wronged the pride of Thy curved brow, soiled the lustre of Thy bright forehead and vexed the gleam of Thy eyes!

Ah! if I could reach Thee with soft steps, stealthily gliding over the velvety green carpets all round, to pray for forgiveness!

I that forsook Thee am condemned, I pine—succour me, ah succour me, dear Radha."

The *Sakhis* thus carry back a message to Sri Radha:—

"So singeth Krishna, His heart full of faith and devotion, aye, replete with agony and brimful with tears. Ah! the music of burning hopes and pining fears."

The *Sakhis* beg Her thus:—

"Radha! thou art sick in love! Krishna is pining. Moonlight turns pale; the breeze sighs: Forsake this lament: Forgive the great sin of separation: lotus of our heart! repair to the Lord and console thereby thyself and satisfy Him." (For text vide App. Item 66).

But does Radha hear what the *Sakhis* say? Ah no! for lost to all around her is she not softly saying to herself:— 'Come Krishna! The moon is come to light my dark path! Guide me, Hari, betwixt the gloom—' The lament grows into a wail—a lingering dirge:—

(3)

"Krishna! if Thou cometh not these dark eye-lids will droop like a lotus leaf in the rain storm.

Ah! I have prepared the couch of jasmine flowers for Thee—silvery white—made soft and fragrant, aye fresh with my tears.

Ah! with my lotus eyes I have searched and examined softness of the pillows—lest they prick Thy cosy body!

Krishna! I sigh, I bury my head in the pillows but whom shall I see, if my eyes cannot greet Thee?

Krishna! great is my loss if with a kiss you do not reward me;

Sighing and suffering I pass my nights—joyless and dreary.

Krishna! hast Thou forsaken me, forgotten, and not forgiven me—then why tarry long?"

(For text vide App. Item 67).

.......and then follows the heart-rending gesture that makes the very clouds weep, as Sri Radha bows to mother Earth and prays for the great and glorious meeting........

Radha's words have wings and Her sighs are vocal, bold and persuasive messengers that thrill and flash like lightning and touch the senses as music from a guitar played by a master-artist. Well do they carry the great message and succeed in their mission. For, in answer did not Sri Krishna with the name of Sri Radha on His lips, lost to the world like a great love maniac, rush to Sri Radha, forsaking the long dirges he was singing on the flute? Sore in heart, and sighing cometh He to Her, who is now singing, as it were her last, farewell song in feverish haste:—

"Oh God of Death I take Thy shelter

For He cometh not and I can endure no longer without Him.

Let me die and end this anguish................"

And as she sings so—one by one she throws away her ornaments and bangles. Radha sinks like a languishing flower drooping at the onslaught of a cruel storm-breeze.

It is now Krishna's turn—and He rushes forward. As He proceeds, He mutters "My feet rush! My glances rush to succour My falling Radha! My breath goes forth to strengthen Her faltering breath! Wind! breathe freshness into My Beloved."

Here the poet emerges and commences the memorable song of the meeting of Radha and Krishna, so elegantly translated by Sir Edwin Arnold,[5] from whom I quote below:

[5]We give the translation of the following one song by Arnold with due acknowledgement and recommend to the readers to read with profit, his *Lord's Song* being a translation of the first XI cantos of *Gita Govinda*.

(4)

"O angel of my hope! O my heart's home!
My fear is lost in love, my love in fear;
This, bids me trust my burning wish, and come,
That checks me with its memories drawing near
Lift up thy look, and let the thing it saith
End fear with grace or darken love to death.
Or only speak once more, for though Thou slay me
Thy heavenly mouth must move, and I shall hear
Dulcet delights of perfect music sway me.
Again—again that voice so blest and dear;
Sweet judge! the prisoner prayeth for his doom
That he may hear his fate divinely come.
Speak once more! then Thou canst not choose but show
Thy mouth's unparalleled and honeyed wonder
Where like pearls hid in red-lipped shells, the row
Of pearly teeth, Thy rose-red lips lie under;
Ah me! I am that bird that wooes the moon;
And pines, poor fool! to make it glitter soon.
Yet hear me on, because I cannot stay
The passion of my soul because my gladness
Will pour forth from my heart—since that far day
When through the mist of all my sin and sadness
Thou didst vouchsafe—surpassing One! to break
All else I slighted for Thy noblest sake.
Thou that hast been my blood, my breath, my being
The pearl to plunge for in the sea of life
The sight to strain for, past the bounds of seeing
The victory to win through longest strife

My queen, my crowned Mistress, my shepherd Bride!
  Take this for Truth, that what I say beside.
Of bold love-grown full orbed at sight of Thee
May be forgiven with a quick remission;
For Thou divine fulfilment of all hope!
Thou all undreamed completion of the vision!
I gaze upon Thy beauty and my fear
Passes as clouds do, when the moon shines clear.
So if Thou art angry still, this shall avail,
  Look straight at me, and let Thy bright glances
    wound me,
Fetter me! Gyve me! Lock me in the gaol
  Of Thy delicious arms; make fast around me,
The silk soft manacles of wrists and hands
  Then kill me; I shall never break those bands.
The starlight jewels flashing on Thy breast
  Have not my right to hear Thy beating heart;
The happy jasmine buds that clasp Thy waist
  Are soft usurpers of my place and part;
If that fair girdle only there must shine,
Give me the girdle's life—the girdle mine!
Thy brow like smooth *bandhuka*—leaves, Thy cheek
  which the dark-tinted *madhuk's* velvet shows;
Thy long-lashed lotus eyes lustrous and meek
  Thy nose a *Tila*-bud, Thy teeth like rows
Of *kunda* petals! he who pierceth hearts
  Points with Thy loveliness all five darts.
But radiant, perfect, sweet, supreme, forgive!
My heart is wise, my tongue is foolish still
I know where I am come—I know I live—

I know that Thou art Radha—that this will
Last and be heaven: that I have leave to rise
Up from Thy feet and look into Thine eyes."
—Grace followed. Forgiveness came—Glorious ending—

"So they met and so they ended
Pain and parting being blended
Life with life made one for ever
In high Love—and Jaideo
Hasteneth on to close the story
Of their bridal grace and glory."

(For text App. Item 68)

Very great is the efficacy of this Great Song written in 12 cantos. The Lord Sri Radha Krishna Himself appears where it is sung. But it is difficult to sing it in the proper tone. From personal experience I can say that only after coming to Sri Brindaban, did I hear it properly rendered for the first time and that by Sri Mata Krishnaji. She is amongst us today—may she be spared to us for long to delight the saints with her *kirtan* (musical demonstration) of this Great Poem. Only an austere saintly life of hers —fragrant with fasts and vigils, renunciation and yearning for the Divine Meeting—can bring out the real music and significance of this great Poem—an offering to the Lord.

Lord Chaitanya cherished it as the very breath of his life and would not pass a day without hearing its recital. In North India amongst the saints as well as literatteurs it is held in very high esteem. Of course the theme is drawn from the *Bhagwat* and the *Garga Samhita*—the great works on Vaishnavism. But it has the stamp of personal experience. Sri Jaideoji had himself witnessed the Divine *Lila* he has sung. Many Sanskrit commentators have written elaborately on it discussing the various stages of Love, through which the devotee has to pass in his pursuit of the path and which are detailed in the great work.

On his arrival in Brindaban Jaideo sat in meditation at many places to draw inspiration from the actual *lila*-spots of the Lord Radha Krishna. We therefore notice perfect faultless descriptions of every minute detail of the Dalliance Scene and other episodes of the Divine *Lila* of Sri Radha Krishna in the *Gita Govinda.*

Even today the little village of Kendubilwa[6] where Jaideoji passed the last portion of his life is reputed as being the spot where this great saint and his consort had *darshan* of their favourite Lord Sri Radha Krishna. The spiritual life of a Sri Radha Krishna devotee, is incomplete if he has not drunk the nectarean drops from out of this spring of Divine Love—the *Gita Govinda.*

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[6]In the Birbhum District of Bengal.

Chapter V

BILWAMANGAL

The Singer of *Krishna Karnamrita*

(Cir. 1300 A.D.)

A Shiva worshipper: a paramour of the courtesan Chintamani: a composer of songs for unworthy clients: a hankerer after sensual enjoyment—such are some of the activities that mark the early life of this great poet-saint of Deccan—Bilwamangal.

The light that converted his dark heart, and as if in a flash, changed it into the effulgent abode of Lord Sri Krishna came from his deeply beloved courtesan—Chintamani, whom after his enlightenment he worships as his first guru, dedicating a beautiful verse to her:

> *"Chintamanirjayati Somgirir Gurur mey*
> *Siksa gurushcha Bhagwan sikhipichmauli."*

I bow to my teachers, the first of whom is Chintamani and to Somgiri and the Lord Sri Krishna, I offer my salutations.

How it all came about and the erstwhile sinner became the greatest saint of his time—of whom even Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says, "I treasure *Sri Krishna Karnamrita* as the very jewel that decorates my heart"—was the effect of a simple exhortation. In the matter of enlightenment, the 'moment' matters. It came in the life of Bilwamangal, about a thousand years back on the banks of Krishna Vina in South India. The great Pandit Bilwamangal was so infatuated by the charms of Chintamani, that even on sacred days, when he was observing a fast on the death of his father, on a stormy night he crossed the river on a dead



BILWAMANGAL Sketch: *R. Rawa*

body mistaking it for a plank sent by his beloved Chintamani, and in climbing on to the roof to reach her he caught hold of a cobra hanging there. The noise of his jump from the roof into the courtyard aroused the sleeping Chintamani, who, observing her paramour's infatuation, was suddenly fired by the latent memories in the recesses of her heart covered over with unholy *parabdh—karma phals* (destiny) —which were responsible for this unholy love. Her exhortation was simple but it pierced his heart as pointing to the lovely picture of Sri Balgopal hanging on the wall she said, "Behold, ye the picture of Gopal! how beautiful and heart-captivating! If the devotion you confer on me was given to Him, easily would ye cross the ocean of metempsychosis and for ever dwell in the realm of Eternal Beatitude." Bilwamangal rose, as if impelled by a Divine Power, and proceeded immediately—renouncing all—to Brindaban—with the beautiful song "Govind, Damodar, Madhav" on his lips.

On reaching Brindaban, his night-long vigils, wails and terrible privations aroused the mercy of Sri Krishna and He appeared before Bilwamangal. The soft touch of Krishna's hands sent a thrill in the poet's body, and as Krishna withdrew His hands, came the pathetic yet bold verse from the lips of Bilwamangal:—

"Hastamutshipye yato 'si balat Krishna kimadbhutam
Hrdyad yadi niryasi paurusam ganyami te."

What bravado! in thus wrenching off Thine hands from my feeble grasp? Deservedly shalt Thou be praised if Ye can slip off my heart. *i.e.* I bind Thee fast to the pillar of my heart.

Full with the divine joy of *Sakshatkar,* day and night Bilwamangal was singing of the exploits of Balkrishna as also his personal experiences with Him. All these are

recorded in elegant verses of the great poem—*Sri Krishna Karnamrita.*

As the news of the meeting of Bilwamangal with the Lord reached Chintamani she also turned an anchorite and entered the path of Love. Renouncing all, the great Magdalene repaired to Brindaban. On reaching there she refused to accept the food offered by Bilwamangal and others observing "He is far-famed for His keen desire to reclaim the sinners and He has given proof of it in your case, Bilwamangal; I, who am in no way a lesser sinner than thee, deserve His mercy all the more. I shall accept food only at the Lord's hands or fast till death." Her dogged determination, which knew no turning back on the path when once the step was taken, moved Sri Krishna and He Himself appeared and fed and blessed her.

Since then first at Bihar Ghat and then opposite Sri Govind Deva Temple in Brindaban, Bilwamangal, in the company of saints, sang to the Lord while Chintamani danced. Thus passed the remaining portion of their lives in Brindaban.

The passionate outpourings of Bilwamangal are all the more attractive when accompanied by the music of Chintamani's trinkets. The verses are wrought into an exquisite garland marked by its perfection, sweetness and purity of passion, thrilling in rhythm and melody, replete with mystic love. They are brilliant specimens of Sanskrit lyric poetry. Even to this day like the *Gita Govinda* of Sri Jaideo in North India—in South India the saints keep night-long vigils singing together *Krishna Karnamrita shlokas* of the boyhood of Sri Krishna—His pastoral life in the midst of the gorgeous scenery of the wilderness of Brindaban, His love-sports with the Gopis and Gopas of Braja, the beauty of His heart—rapturous Lotus Face, donning the peacock-crown garmented in *pitambar,* flashing like lightning, while dancing in the *Ras Lila* dances (Dalliance Scenes), are the

principle themes of this great work. We give the translations and text of 36 out of the 300 verses (*shlokas*) contained in the work:—[1]

(1)

Prostrations unto Thee—All Effulgence Divine, to Thee protector of the cows, supporter of the Universes, resting on the bosom of Thy devotee Sri Radha and having for a bed the soft body offered by Sri Shesha—the thousand-hooded serpent. (For text vide App. Item 69).

(2)

O Ye! wise ones, who have sought Him in vain in the wilds of the Vedas, take my advice and discover Him successfully in the abode of the Gopikas, where this Goal of the *Upanishad*-worshippers, stands fastened to the pounding stone. (Vide App. Item 70).

(3)

I bow to the spotless Lord, who sports underneath the *kadamb* tree in Brindaban, and seated in the *Padma* (lotus) *yoga asan* (*yogic*-posture) delights the devotee, by playing on the flute. (Vide App. Item 71).

(4)

Art Thou veritably the cupid? or the Abode of Effulgence? or quintessential sweetness? Ah—Thou the nectarean balm to my sore eyes! Inspirer of my speech, Lord of my heart, who art Thou, O wonderful youth who stands before my eyes? (Vide App. Item 72).

(5)

Thou conferer of the boon of Love; fulfiller of my desires, Thou granter of insight and lordship—Thou art my

[1]For Sanskrit Text see appendix (items 69 to 104) at the end of this Book.

life and support. I know of no God besides Thee; none equal or superior to Thee. Thou art my Lord for ever and ever. (Vide App. Item 73).

(6)

For Thy abode the wide universe; for Thy consort the Goddess Laxmi to sport with; for Thy children the Creator Brahma and Cupid—the God of Love, for Thy slaves, Indra and the Devas—O Lord, supreme over all, how wonderful are Thy deeds and exploits! (Vide App. Item 74).

(7)

Aye! what is the quintessence of life and where does light abide in this dark world? Surely in the remembrance of the Lotus Feet of the Destroyer of Kamsa and in the contemplation of the Crusher of demon Andhkar (lit. darkness), *i.e.* Sri Krishna. (Vide App. Item 75).

(8)

May the Lord protect us,—He Who dons the *pitambar*, plays on the flute and to Whom rushed the deer-eyed Gopis, tearing the bonds of affection that held them to their husbands, unmindful of their body, with hair bristling and standing on end, curly locks entangled and carelessly flying, lips parched, breasts heaving and navels throbbing—in so many ways displaying their boundless devotion and self-surrender to the Lord. (Vide App. Item 76).

(9)

Sing thou, O tongue, the praises, of Him, Who very gently and softly plays sweet tunes on the flute, Who drives the cows to graze in the pastures in Brindaban and in the evening brings them back home, Whose praises the Vedas sing, the Destroyer of demons, and the Spoiler of Indra's sacrifice, and above all the secretly Beloved One of the Gopis. (Vide App. Item 77).

(10)

When next I am born as the fruit of my meritorious deeds, let me be born a reed on the banks of the Jamuna, a reed like the one I see in the hands of Sri Krishna, so that I may enjoy the bliss of drinking the nectar of the lips of the Darling of Nanda. (Vide App. Item 78).

(11)

I crave for a break in my *samadhi*—so that I may witness Thy radiant face, effulgent in the moonlight, with its sweet nectarean lips breathing ethereal notes in the flute. Pray grant me that boon. (Vide App. Item 79).

(12)

O Lord! my Beloved One! my sole relation in this world! O Krishna! O' Restless One, full of mischief! Thou Ocean of Mercy! O, my solitary Support and companion! Thou delight of my eyes. Pray tell me when wilt Thou grace me with Thy Blessed vision. (Vide App. Item 80).

(13)

Goodbye my ablutions and prayers: adieu my baths! Salutations for all times ye *Devas, pitras* forgive me, for I am unable to propitiate ye all. I desire to pass the rest of my days in the contemplation of the crown of the Yadava race and the destroyer of Kamsa in some obscure corner. This I consider enough *sadhana* on my part. I need to perform no more expiation of sins. (Vide App. Item 81).

(14)

Sweet, very sweet is Krishna's form. His body is delicately sweet: Ah, beaming with sweetness is His face. His soft soothing smiles spread honeyed fragrance all round—captivating, enthralling, enrapturing and wonderfully sweet. (Vide App. Item 82).

(15)

Depart thou Cupid from my heart. It is dedicated to the Lord of Laxmi—Madhava—solely. No trespassers are allowed upon His arrival in His abode. (Vide App. Item 83).

(16)

In the sweeping current of life, I cherish most that moment when my mind, full of devotion, drinks deep of the exploits of the blue-complexioned Krishna. (Vide App. Item 84).

(17)

If perchance my devotion for Thee, O Thou of Divine resplendent youthful form, become fixed and steadfast, then doth *Nirvana* stand in audience on me while *Dharma*, *Artha* (riches) and *Kama* (satisfaction of desires) await my pleasure. (Vide App. Item 85).

(18)

O my boon companion! What is there to hear and be comforted by? To whom are we to narrate the tale of our separation? How can we contemplate the Sweet Form that has fascinated me? O! tell me how to have His vision, who is the delight of my eyes and who has captivated my heart and mind and yet eludes all description? (Vide App. Item 86).

(19)

O Thou with luxuriant, profuse, dense curly hair, swaying on the forehead; with melodious sweet voice, penetrating, piercing eyes, luscious lips and tantalising appearance—O Dear One! when shall I enjoy these charms? (Vide App. Item 87).

(20)

I crave for one blessing—cast one lingering look on me, a glance that plays in tune with the music of Thy flute. Believe me, if Thy grace I obtain I care not to hold any earthly possessions. If however I am denied it the world loses all charm for me. (Vide App. Item 88).

(21)

May that Radha purify the world of its sins, who is so lost in contemplation of Her Lord Krishna that heedlessly She is churning with fervour an empty curd-pot! May that Lord Krishna cleanse the world of its sins, Who in the madness of His passionate transcendental love for the Gopikas, attempts to milch a young bull (instead of a cow). (Vide App. Item 89).

(22)

I seek refuge in that Govinda, with body effulgent like the moon, Who held the Gopis in His embrace; Who raised the Mount Govardhan on His finger to protect the Gopas and Whose curly hair looks more beautiful when covered by the particles of dust raised by the hoofs of the cows, returning with Him from the pastures. (Vide App. Item 90).

(23)

As the Gopi went forth to sell her butter and curds in the market, her mind was so lost pondering on the Lotus Feet of Lord Murari, that she forgot her errand, and started instead repeating who will buy, who will buy Madhava, Damodar, Govinda!? (Vide App. Item 91).

(24)

The pounding stone, the mind of the *yogi* seated in contemplation and the bosom of the Gopi on fire with Krishna's Love—these three are as the stakes, to which Murari is fastened like a young elephant tethered. (Vide App. Item 92).

(25)

Between Madhava and Madhava stood a Gopi and between every two Gopis stood a Madhava. In the centre also stood Madhava—the Son of Devaki—playing on the flute. Thus was formed the circle to perform the *Ras Lila* (Dalliance Dances). The arrangement was unique. (Vide App. Item 93).

(26)

Let seekers after *Atman* seek assiduously the Lord Supreme in the cave of their heart, where He lies hid; our delight lies in narrating and hearing of the sweet tales of the youth and sports (*lilas*) of the Darling Child of Yasoda. (Vide App. Item 94).

(27)

O Gopal! incomprehensible are Thy ways! Thou mixeth with the dusty cowherds, but avoideth visiting the holy *tapasvi* Brahmans: Thou respondeth to the call of the cowherd lads, while sitting mute when the pandits sing Thy praises, and call upon Thee. Thou playeth the slave to the lasses of Gokul, while refusing to accept suzerainty over the hearts of the yogis. Now do I realise, O Krishna! that Thy grace is showered on those, as Thy feet move towards those who, cherish undivided love for Thee. (Vide App. Item 95).

(28)

Many are the incarnations of the Lotus-Eyed Lord, which have conferred benefits on the world. But I ask, is there one besides Krishna—Who has granted *mukti* (emancipation from rebirth) even to the cows, Gopis and Gopas? (Vide App. Item 96).

(29)

Great is the glory of Thy flute O Lord! as it sounds, it maddens the world, pleases the trees, moves the mountains,

enchants the deer, thrills the cowherds, causes the yogis to enter *samadhi* (loss of consciousness) and by its seven notes reveals the secret significance of AUM (*Pranava*). (Vide App. Item 97).

(30)

The darkness dispelled, let two things ever illuminate my mind—the delicately charming Lotus Face of the child Krishna and the dust of the holy feet of the Gopis. (Vide App. Item 98).

(31)

May the azure-complexioned One—wearing the golden string round His waist, the garland dangling on His bosom, the begemmed ear-rings shining in His ears, and pearly drops of perspiration coursing down His cheeks as He drove the chariot of Arjuna—protect us. (Vide App. Item 99).

(32)

We offer obeisance to thee, fortunate flute, that ever drinketh nectar from the Lotus Lips of our Beloved Mukunda and we pray thee to carry one errand of ours to Him. When next thee getteth close to the sweet lips of Nanda's son whisper softly of our woeful plight in separation from Him. (Vide App. Item 100).

(33)

When wilt Thou be moved by my distress and send wafting to me the fragrance of Thy youthful gaiety; and when wilt Thou, O Ocean of Mercy! cast Thy look of grace on me? (Vide App. Item 101).

(34)

If Thou art pleased, what care I for the accumulation of virtues? However, if Thou art displeased, of what avail are all my virtues? Futile is the *kum-kum* (fragrant) paint

on the body both when the Dear One is deeply attached to his wife and when he is not. (Vide App. Item 102).

(35)

Anywhere, at any time and in any birth, if ever I develop faith in Thee, *Nirvana* shall not remain unattainable, not to speak of obtaining the lower *siddhis* (supernatural powers). (Vide App. Item 103).

(36)

As the last breath leaves my mortal frame, may that Radiance Supreme—Radha's Krishna—Mercy Incarnate, standing cross-legged, with the peacock plume on His crown, the neck a little bent, and playing sweet notes on the flute, appear before my eyes. (Vide App. Item 104).

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APPENDIX

Introduction—Hindi Songs

Item No. 1.

गहरे कर के नींव खुदाई ऊपर मंडप छाये
मारकंडे ते को अधिकाई जिन त्रण धर मूंड बलाये।
हमारा करता राम सनेही
काहे नर गर्व करत हहु बिनस जाई झूंठी देही ।।

Item No. 2.

मो मन गिरधर छबि पै अटक्यो ।। टेक ।।
ललित त्रिभंग चाल पै चलि कै
चिबुक चारु गड़ि ठटक्यो।
सजल स्याम घन बरन लीन ह्वै
फिर चित्त अनत न भटक्यो।
'कृष्णदास' किये प्राण निछावर
यह तन जग सिर पटक्यो ।।

Item No. 3.

तब लगि कुसल न जीव कहुँ सपनेहु मन विश्राम्।
जब लगि भजत न राम कहुँ सोक धाम तजि काम् ।।

सिया राम सरुप अगाध अनूप
विलोचन मीनन को जलु है।
श्रुति राम कथा मुख राम को नाम
हिय पुनि रामहि को थलु है।
मति रामहि सों गति रामहि सों
रति राम सों रामहि को बलु है।
सब की न कहे 'तुलसी' के मते
इतनो जग जीवन को फलु है ।।

I. THE GOPIS OF BRAJ

Hindi Songs

'गोपी विरह'

Item No. 4.

बड़ी पुरानी बात कहती हूँ।

मेरे जीवन के सरोवर में एक कमल खिला था। प्रियतम् भ्रमर बन गूंजता उसे अपनाने आया था, अपने कण्ठ लगाने आया था।

उस प्रेमलिङ्गन का सुखस्मरण कर आज भी मैं फूली नहीं समाती।

उस को अपने पास देख डरती थी, कि कहीं मेरे हृदय का भाव न वह जान ले . . . . . .

वह आया था। खूब आया था, शोर मचाता आया था। किसी को क़ैदी बनाने आया था।

आज वह मधुकर प्रेम-पुष्प की पंखड़िओं में बैठ खुद फंस गया था। वह जो विजय का पताका उड़ाता आया था, पंख फैलाता आया था, आज प्रेम के बंदी ख़ाने में मस्त बेड़ी पहने सुध-बुध बिसराये पड़ा है।

कुछ ऐसा ही है गोपी-प्रेम का रहस्य।

उस अनन्य भक्ति की रीति मर्यादा-पथ के नियम से सदा ही से न्यारी है। जो फंसाने आता है, स्वयं उस में फंस प्राण-न्योछावर करने पर तुल जाता है। कैसी अपनी विरहिनी की पहनाई उन स्वर्ण-बेड़ियों को चूम और कण्ठ लगा अपने धधकते हृदय की प्रचण्ड अग्नि को शान्त करता है।

बालपने से मैं यह गाथा सुनती आई थी--"पारस लोहे को स्वर्ण बनाता है" पर यह 'गोपी-विरह' पारस प्रियतम् को प्रेयसी, कृष्ण को श्री राधा बनाता है, यह तो ब्रज में ही आकर अनुभव हुआ।

तभी तो मर्म की ज्ञाता--श्री राधा-दासी--गोपी, ब्रज की भोली ग्वालिनी सदा यही मांग मांगती है:

'दे डालो अपना विरह और भर दो मुझ भिखारिनि की झोली, कि मैं वह दर्द पा जी सकूं।'

सदा क्लेजे की निकलती हूक को दबातीं, आहों का गला घोटतीं, अश्रुओं को समेटतीं, अपना यह धन सम्भालतीं कि कहीं खो न जायें और वे निर्धन रह जायें; फिर प्यारे का क्या ले स्वागत करेंगी। इस लोक की गुणातीत श्री कृष्ण को सुहाई है तो केवल एक यही सामग्री। कुछ ऐसा ही है, यह 'गोपी–विरह'।

यदि एक कण मिल जाता तो जीवन सफल हो जाता ॥ १ ॥

Item No. 5.

प्यारे आ! प्रियतम् हौले २ आ! मेरे कान में विरह का मंत्र फूंकने आ! मेरे हृदय-मृग को ओ सारङ्गधर! बेधने आ! सावधान! कहीं यह तीर पार न हो जाय और मैं कसक को अपनाने से वंचित रह जाऊं।

प्यारे आ! कि मैं तेरे निशाना लगाने में कुशल हस्त-कमल चूम सकूं। सावधान! धीमे २ आ! इस रोते २ निद्रा-मग्न हो जाने वाले मेरे हृदय को जगाने आ!

नहीं नहीं, 'किसी' को जागृत में न पा, स्वप्न में खोजने को आतुर हो पड़ा है, ऐसा आ, कि वह जाग न जाय और अपनी स्वप्न में मिलन की आशा को बिसरा दुःखी न हो बैठे . . . .

हैं क्या कह गई . . . . ?

प्रियतम् आ! अवश्य आ! इसको जगाने को आ! कि यह निराशा की तरणि से निकल तेरे प्रेम सागर में डूब अपने प्राण निछावर कर दे।

तू आ! मुझे भरोसा है! मेरे पास कहानी सुनाने को प्रचुर कौशल-सामग्री है; आह है, कसक है, स्वर्ण सा विरही तन है . . . .

फिर क्यों न सुनेगा तू मेरी विरह-गाथा! मेरे स्वामी! क्यों न प्रदान करेगा नित्य प्रेमोपहार! दो अपने कमल नेत्र से ढलकते आंसू . . . . . !

वह आयेगा . . . . मेरी बीती सुनने आयेगा . . . . मेरा कैसा मन-मोहन स्वप्न . . . . . . !

हृदय! तू विश्वास मत कर बैठ कि वह आयेगा; . . . . नहीं तो कैसे सम्भाल सकेगा इन प्राणों को . . . .

ओ मर्म के जानने वाले, कहां योग कहां वियोग! कौन लेगा तड़प को उस मिलन की आशा के बदले?

मेरे हृदय! अपनाये जा इस कसक को और देखे जा स्वर्णमय मिलन-स्वप्न को . . . . . ! ॥ २ ॥

Item No. 6.

फुंक जा! मेरे विरही हृदय!

वियोग की रात्रि में बन जा टिमटिमाता दीपक! प्रियतम् उसकी ज्योतिपर पतंग बन जीवन न्योछावर करने आयेगा। और तेरे आलिङ्गन की लपेट में आ चिपट कर सदा के लिए शान्त हो विश्राम करेगा। नहीं, नहीं, तेरे प्रेम-पाश में बंध जायेगा।

ओ मेरे विदग्ध हृदय! शोर न मचा। संसारी को अपना राग सुनाने से क्या लाभ? इस पार के विषयों से कब शान्त होगी तेरी भूख! तुझको उस भोक्ता के आलिङ्गन की आवश्यकता है, जिसका तू भोग है। वह तेरा भोक्ता स्वामी तेरी भूख मिटाने में समर्थ है। वह तेरी त्वरा देख तेरे पास एकान्त में तुझको तेरी विरह मूर्च्छा से जगाने स्वयं आयेगा।

परदे में छिपा वह तेरा स्वामी, पर्दा फाड़ता आयेगा . . . तेरी मांग! विलक्षण है। तेरा विरह कब तू त्रैलोक्यं के साम्राज्य से बदलने वाला है। तेरे भाग्य जो तुझको यह बहुमूल्य सामग्री प्राप्त है। यह उस का अनुग्रह न जाने कितने तेरे जप-तप का फल है। कितने जन्मों

की चाह का परिणाम है। कैसा निष्काम महापवित्र यह परम भाव है। ओ विरहिनि! यह तेरा कृष्ण-विरह . . . . .।

. . पथिक! अपनी विषयी अंगुली से इसे स्पर्श न कर। मत लगा मेरे विरह पर अपनी औषधि। मुझे जलने दे। तू क्या जाने इस दर्द का मज़ा, इस मेरे रक्त बहाते कलेजे के घाव का रहस्य। तू अपनी राह ले और मुझको सम्हाल लेने दे, पुकार लेने दे, अपनी नित्य की पुकार :

'मेरे कन्हैया! आ जा बस एक बार' ॥ ३ ॥

Item No. 7.

क्यों तुम थम गये? ओ मेरे विरह के संगी अश्रु! बहो। ओ मेरे हृदय! रक्त बन चल। ओ मेरी आहों! तुम धुयें का तूफ़ान चारों ओर उमड़ाओ।

नहीं तो यह मेरा जीवन, विरह-शून्य रह जायेगा।

बिना विरह सामग्री मेरा प्यारा मेरी हृदय-हाट पर क्यों आने लगा! क्यों मुझे चाहने लगा। प्रियतम, प्रेयसी क्यों बनने लगा। . . .

विरह, विरह नहीं जो प्रेम का स्वरूप न बदल सके। प्रियतम् को प्रेयसी न बना सके।

वह प्रेम की राख, राख नहीं जिस में जीवन की चिंगारी निहित न हो। वह भी कोई राख है जो अंदर बाहर सर्वत्र शुष्क राख ही है, रस लेश मात्र जिस में नहीं। ऐसी राख को कुरेदने फिर प्रियतम क्यों आने लगा! वह रसिया! ऐसा मंद खेल क्यों पसंद करने लगा।

वह शिकारी मेरे जीवन पर प्रहार करने आता है। मारने नहीं आता, सिसकाने आता है। मुझे तड़पता देखना उस रसिया को सुहाता है। उस की यही भजन परिपाटी है, आंसू देख आंसू बहाना। उसे सब सुख त्रिपाद विभूति में हैं। नहीं है तो केवल 'विरह'। उस का अनुभव करने इस लोक में लीला स्वरूप धारण करता है। हां इस ब्रज में इस चाह को ले मेरा स्वामी आता है। . . . .

वह क्या करेगा हमारे जीवन का गाहक हो कर। यदि किरण सूर्य्य से निकल भागे तो क्या वह तेज पुंज, याचक बन उस को लौटाने की इच्छा से उस के पीछे दौड़ता है? इस अंश रूपी जीव का अपने अंशी में उस के प्रवेश करने से, उस के स्वामी का क्या लाभ?

. . . . . वह निर्गुण, सगुण रूप धारण कर संतोष ढूंढता है। कहां? समर्थ राधा-विरह की गोद में। राधा-विरह अनुभव करने स्वामी आता है। रोता है। रुलाने आता है।

महाधनी श्याम! प्रेमी के आंसू का मोल न दे सकने की सामर्थ्य रख, गोपी का ऋणी बनने आता है। वृन्दावन की कुंजों में केलि करने श्याम सुन्दर आता है। धूम मचाने प्यारा आता है। होली खेलने प्रियतम् उस पार से इस पार आता है। ॥४॥

. . . . . .

Item No. 8.

प्रियतम्! कमल तुम को प्रिय हैं। मैं 'तत्सुखं सुखित्वात् की उपासिका, नित्य नवीन जलज की माला गूंथ तुम्हें अर्पण करने को आतुर हो उठी हूं। . . .

प्यारे गुलाब पर तुम रीझे हो। यही ना, कि उस में कंटक है। जानते हो वह रस का रहस्य जानता है। जिस में कांटा न हो वह पुष्प-लता कैसी? जिस में दर्द का कांटा न हो वह प्रेम तरु कैसा? . . .

अच्छा श्याम सुन्दर! मैं एक पुष्प बाटिका बनाऊंगी। बड़ी सुन्दर कुंज होगी। तुम उस में आना। उस को सिसक, आहों के काटों से रोकूंगी, उस को आंसुओं की खाई से चारों ओर से घेरूंगी। तब उस में खिलेगा प्रियतम् तुम्हारे मिलन का पुष्प। तुम आओगे ना?

छिटकती शरद पूर्णिमा में उस बाटिका में झिलमिली लगाऊंगी। वही शीतल किरणें घुस तुम्हारे चरण नख की ज्योति चूम अपनी प्रभा बढ़ा उस कुंज को प्रकाशमान करेंगी।

श्याम! क्या तुम उस एकान्त में मुझे आलिंगन करने आओगे? उस मधुर मुस्कान का सुख देने पधारोगे? . . . . . .

मैं निर्धन उस धन को पा, कैसे अपने को संभाल सकूंगी? मूक हो जाऊंगी। सदा के लिये मूक हो जाऊंगी। ॥४॥

Item No. 9.

प्रेम तू महान है। यदि किसी के भाग्य में इस का कण पड़ जाये। विरह का यह फल है—यह प्रेम। इस की ज्योति पा, विरहिनी का मुख खिल उठता है। कपोल पुष्पवत् प्रकाशने लगते हैं और अश्रु मानों मधु की वर्षा करने, उन पर दौड़ पड़ते हैं। वे ही अश्रु जो जलाते थे, आज अमृत बरसाते हैं। प्रेम! तेरी महिमा!

नाथ! क्या मेरे जीवन में तुमने वह महान सुख लिखा है? "हां" अवश्य लिखा होगा . . . . जो भी हो, 'नहीं' कहते डर लगता है। . . . . . पर . . . . .

यदि 'योग' लिखा है, तो मेरे इस जीवन-विरह की मृत्यु है। फिर क्या ले जीऊंगी।

तभी कहती हूं 'विधाता ने पैदा होते समय ही मेरे मस्तक पर अंकित कर दिया था " निरन्तर विरह में पगली तू जल, सदा जल'। कुछ चतुरानन से ऐसी होड़ बंधी थी।

ठीक है विरही का प्रेम, प्रेम कहां जो उसके साथ योग की आशा लगी हो। वह तब **काम** कहलाये। स्वार्थ हो जाये।

निकृष्ट है **काम**। जहां लेन देन का भाव आया, और प्रेम वहां से चलदिया। निर्गुण मेरे स्वामी को यह सकाम त्रैगुणी भावना नहीं सुहाती। तभी तो परा भक्ति की अधिष्ठात्री, श्री रास-रासेश्वरी ने विरही पथिक को उपदेश किया है:

'जल! सदा जल! विरह की दावानल में सावधान हो, जल! सिसक! सिसक! और गरम आहें खींच, कि प्रियतम् का पथ प्रकाशमान रहे, वहां शीतलता का भय नष्ट हो जाये। क्या जाने कब प्रियतम् आ जाये . . .

'वह आयेगा' स्वामिनि ने आशा दी है। प्यारा आयेगा। पर बहुत निकट न आयेगा। कैसे संभाल सकूंगी उसका निकट आना? क्या विद्युत की समीपता घन संभाल सकता है? रो देता है, छिन्न भिन्न हो जाता है। फिर यह माया विरचित मेरा शरीर कैसे संभाल सकेगा, उस प्रकृति से परे के बासी की झांकी, उसके आलिंगन का सुख?

'हां वह आयेगा', प्यारी जी का आश्वासन है। हंसता आयेगा। मुसकाता आयेगा। अपनी माधुर्य्य की मोहिनी में उलझाता आयेगा। मेरा सुलझाना असंभव करता आयेगा।

मेरे जीवन में मेरा स्वामी, एक बार अवश्य आयेगा ॥ ३ ॥

Item No. 10.

किस की शक्ति जो सह सके उसके ऐश्वर्य का प्रहार। चतुरानन क्षीर सागर से आकाश वाणी मात्र से संतुष्ट हो लौट आते। तपस्वी परम भगवत दास, सदाशिव, समाधि में चरण ध्यान कर जीवन का परम लाभ मानते, फिर और की कौन क्या कहै! इन्द्र और दैत्य राज की कहां गिनती!

उनकी दिव्य शक्ति पा भी पार्थ, नर अवतार, उनके ऐश्वर्य की छटा न सहन कर सका। क्षण मात्र दर्शन कर काँप उठा। रहस्य से परिचित गोपी जन, फिर क्यों इस भय प्रदान करने वाले रूप में उलझें?

यशोदा मैया ने उस त्रैलोक के व्यापक कर्ता के इस विराट स्वरूप की अवहेलना ही की, सुख माना तो प्यारे का दामोदर-बन्धन कर के ही!

मर्म जानती हैं, स्वामी, तेरी यह गोपी। तेरे माधुर्य की यह रसिक बांधे बैठी हैं तेरे–देवताओं को भी दुर्लभ—स्वरूप को अपने आंचल के कोण में। नहीं तो क्या तू त्रिलोकी नाथ गोबर की टोकरी उठाता, माथे पर गोबर की बिंदी लगवाता—गोचरण रज अलकावली पर धारण करता फिरता वृन्दावन की करील कुंजों में और नाचता माखन के लालच से चुटकियों पर?

'प्यारे—यह बेचारे गंवार ब्रजवासी, फंस न जायें तेरे ऐश्वर्य के जाल में'—उस विरहिनि श्री राधा ने, तुम्हारा द्वारकाधीश स्वांग देख तुम्हें साव धान करते प्रभास क्षेत्र में कहा था। . . . . . और तुमने सचेत हो लजाते धारण की थी, वही काली कमलिया, लकुटि और बंसुरिया . . . . .

सदा ही तो तुम्हें ग्वालिये का रूप भाया। 'तुम्हारे—रसो वै स:-स्वरूप को वह परम रसिका कब का परख चुकी थीं, श्रुति बन गान कर चुकी थीं, ऋषि बन दण्डकारण्य में तप कर चुकी थीं। तभी तो जब गोपी बनीं तो अपने केसर चर्चित कुचों पर तुम्हारे चरण कमल हलके-से रखती थीं कि उन की कठोरता से यह पीड़ा न पायें।

श्याम रस की गाहक वे गोपिकायें, तुम्हारे मुखचंद्र की चकोर वे गोपी जन चातकवत् उत्कण्ठित तुम्हारे रूप माधुर्य की स्वांति बूंद की वे याचक: विधाता को कितनी बार न कोसती थीं कि उस कृपण ने केवल दो ही नेत्र दिये, प्रति रोम रोम न दिये; और उन पर भी पलकों के कपाट लगा दिये। फिर उनका भर भर आना, तुम्हारे रूप पर आवरण डालता। हाय! कैसा वे हाथ मसल मसल रह जातीं!

श्याम! तेरे दर्शन ही की याचना सदा तेरी प्यारी गोपी किया करती हैं।

॥७॥

Item No. 11.

'मेरी हृदय तंत्री आकुल हो जा कि प्रियतम् आकर छेड़ दे तुझ पर अपना राग!'

मेरे जीवन की यही एक मात्र लालसा है 'मेरी हृदय-वीणा पर मेरा स्वामी आकर अलौकिक राग, अपनी अंगुलियां चला कर निकाले'।

उसकी वह मधुर तान मुझ सोती को जगा देगी। आओ! प्रियतम्, विलम्ब न करो। मैं वह राग सुनने को आतुर हो उठी हूं।

ओ मेरे हृदय! मेरे निकट के बासी! मेरे सुहृद यह तो बता, क्या मेरा व्यथित हृदय अपने स्वामी के कर स्पर्श का सौभाग्य प्राप्त कर सकेगा? . . . . . . तू भी सिर हिलाता है . . . .

प्रिय रसिक गण! तब तुम हो अपना अनुभव कहो . . . . कि कहीं मेरी हृदय तंत्रो मौन न हो जाये, और आशा, निराशा में परिणित हो जाये। ॥८॥

Item No. 12.

श्रद्धा ही जीवन है। श्रद्धा ही परम धर्म है। श्रद्धा से प्रियतम् मिलता है।

तुम मेरी गाथा श्रद्धा-युक्त हो सुनों। नहीं, नहीं, 'विरहिणी गोपिका' के विदग्ध हृदय की कहानी सुनो।

विश्वास करो, मैं ने उस दीवानी को देखा है। किसी के पद चिन्ह खोजते बन में भटकता देखा है।

विश्वास करो, मैं ने उसे एक राग अलापते सुना है—

'क्वासि कृष्ण'—आन मिलो प्रियतम्'—

विश्वास करो, मैं ने द्रुम-लता से उसे कहते सुना है, सखि बताओ! किधर गया वह हास्य पूर्ण कटाक्ष से हमारा मन हर ले जाने वाला मोहन। कहां गया वह चित चोर'।

और उसी आवेश में आकर की हुई वह पुकार 'मैं ही हूं कृष्ण'— सखि मैंने सुनो है, तुम विश्वास करो।

पर वह साधन से असाध्य कब हाथ आता। जिस को स्वयंवरण करना चाहता उसे मिलता, नहीं पागल बना रातों जगाता, खान पान भुलवाता और बन बन भटकाता। . . . . .

श्याम क्या न आओगे? क्या तुम को 'अपनी' गोपी का मुखारविन्द से निरन्तर का यह पाठ इतना सुहाया है, उनका जलहीन मीन सा रज पर लोटना तड़पना रोता सिसकना इतना भाया है . . . .

Item No. 13.

कुछ ऐसा ही जान पडता है राधा रमण . . . . . नहीं तो क्यों यह विलम्ब ! प्राणनाथ । ॥ ९ ॥

तब ही तो गोपी की पुकार है :

'काम और श्याम'--कभी न देखे एक ठाम ! श्याम से प्रीति करनी है, तो संसार की होली बाल दो। दोनों के स्वाभाविक विपरीत गुण हैं।

कृष्ण प्रेम नीरोग करता है। संसारी कामरोगी बनाता है।

कृष्ण प्रेम नित्य जीवन प्रदान करता है। संसारी काम जीवित के प्राण हरता है। इस पार के रहने वाले क्या जानें उस पार के वासियों की अटपटी चाल ! संसारी तो रोग के निवारण की नित्य नई औषधि खोजते, भटकते फिरते हैं। और कृष्ण प्रेमी अपने विरह के घाव को कुरेदने को सदा तीक्ष्ण धार का कांटा ढूंढते फिरते हैं। कहीं दर्द कम न होजाय और प्यारा विस्मरण न हो जाये।

उसकी विरहनी, प्यारे को रिझाने को निरंतर आंसू और आहों की सामग्री इकट्ठी करती रहती है। संसारी उसका यह कार्य देख डरते हैं कि कहीं पहाड़ सी महान संग्रहकी सम्पत्ति विरही की फूंकसे फुंक न जाय।

तभी कहती हूं। कितने जन्मों के तप समाधि से पुण्य पाप क्षीण हो मिलता है, यह गुणातीत, नित्य, विरह।

बिरला कोई जानता है, श्याम सुंदर के विरह का रहस्य। जो जानता है वही सींचता है इस प्रेम की बेल को। और वही बिखेरता है अधिकारियों के बीच अपना अनुभव–रूपी–पुष्प--'प्रेमैव परमोधर्मः'

॥ १० ॥

Item No. 14.

रातों जागी, फिर भी न आये श्याम !

उस पार से नीली घटा आई, मैं समझी आये मेरे श्याम।

बिजली चमकी, मलयानिल बही, मोर नाचे, मैं समझी श्याम आये। स्वागत को मैं बढ़ी !

संध्या आई। गईयें रंभाई। धूल आकाश में छाई। उस बीच वह नील पुञ्ज ! मैं समझी तुम आये श्याम—मैं चरण पखारने को बढ़ी।

जमुना उमड़ी। वह सुहावना दृश्य। मैं लपकी दण्डवत करने को। समझी स्वामी आये !

हाय ! कहां ऐसे मेरे भाग्य ! आशा की विद्युत मेरे निराश जीवन में चमक शान्त हो गई।

जो देखा स्वप्न था। और क्या था ? जब सब होते भी 'वह' न था। तो कुछ भी न था। जो वह होता तो सब कुछ था। मेरे जीवन का आधार वह था। मेरा सर्वस्व था। मेरा प्यारा था। मेरा दुलारा था। सब था। पर वह न था।

हाय ! हृदय मसल, मैं रह गई। पुकारना चाहती थी न पुकार सकी . . . . पर ठीक ही है। वह न आया। पर उस का 'दर्द' आया। उस का भेजा हुआ, यह विरह, मेरे जीवन का संगी बनने आया। मेरी बुझती विरह की राख को नई चिंगारी दे जीवन प्रदान करने आया !

प्रेम तू धन्य है। तू प्रियतम् का प्यारा है। इस पथ की पथिक, विरह को अपना। यह बहुमूल्य सामग्री है। इसी से प्रियतम् रीझता है। यही गोपीजन का अनुभव, उन का जीवन है। इसी का उपदेश करने, अनुकरण करने, असह्य पीड़ा सहने करुणा वश यह नित्य धाम वासिनी ब्रज में आ पधारी हैं।

'जलो। बढ़ बढ़ कर जलो। प्रियतम् के पथ में इस प्रकाश की भर मार कर दो, कि अर्ध रात्रि की अंधियारी में स्वामी को मिलने आने में कठिनाई न हो। . . . . . .'

और फिर नियम भी है

'दूल्हे के मुखारविन्द की छबि निहारने को आरती जलाना, उस ज्योति का, उस दीपक के जलाने का मेरे जीवन में समय आगया है नहीं तो यह प्राण क्यों चौंक चौंक उठते हैं—कौन कह जाता है . . . . 'वह, उधर देख . . . वह कौन . . . ॥ २२॥

Item No. 15.

मिलन—योग—और पश्चात्।

नित्य, नूतन, निकुञ्ज में प्रवेश।

प्रियतम् ही जब ग्रहण करें, तो उन के विरह का प्रादुर्भाव हो। जिस विरह में निहित है, उन के अधरामृत का रस पान . . . . उसके अतिरिक्त सब सुधा त्याजनीय हैं, सब संसार, त्रैलोक्य का सुख निन्दनीय है।

सुख है तो केवल मधुकर श्याम के चरणारविन्द के मकरंद पान में।

जो प्रियतम् प्रदान करता है, वही ग्रहणीय वस्तु है। वही है ब्रज रस। 'गोपी—विरह से वही मिलता है'।

निकुञ्ज रस का छींटा पा, वह बड़भागी राधाकिंकरी मद्गत हो पुकारती डोलती है, वही मदन मोहिनी पुकार . . . .

हे श्री राधे, दर्शन दो एक बार ॥ १२॥

. . . .

II. MIRA BAI

Hindi Songs

Item No. 16.

आज मैं देख्यो गिरिधारी ॥
सुन्दर बदन मदन की सोभा चितवन अनियारी ॥
बजावत बंसी कुंजन में गावत ताल तरंग रंग ध्वनि
नचत ग्वालगन में ॥
माधुरी वह मूरत प्यारी बसी रहे निसि दिन हिरदे बिच टरे नहीं
टारी ॥
वाही परंतन मन हौं वारी वह मूरति मोहिनि निहारत लोक लाज डारो॥
तुलसी बन कुन्जन संवारो गिरधर लाल नवल नटनागर मीरा
बलिहारो ॥ २ ॥

Item No. 17.

जब ते मोहिं नन्द नन्दन दृष्टि परयो माई।
तब ते लोक परलोक कछु न सुहाई ॥
मोरन को चन्द्र कला सीस मुकुट सोहै।
केसर को तिलक भाल तीन लोक मोहै ॥
कुण्डल की अलक झलक कपोलन पर छाई।
मनो मीन सरवर तज मकर मिलन आई ॥
कुटिल भृकुटी तिलक भाल चितवन में टौना।
खंजन और मधुप मीन भूले मृग छौना ॥
सुन्दर अति नासिका सुग्रीव तीन रेखा।
नटवर प्रभु भेष धरे रूप अति विशेषा ॥
अधर बिंब अरुन नैन मधुर मन्द हाँसी।
दसन दमक दाड़िम द्युति चमके चपला सी ॥
छुद्र घंट किंकिनी अनूप धुनि सुहाई।
गिरधर प्रभु अंग अंग 'मीरा' बलि जाई ॥ २ ॥

Item No. 18.

नैना लोभी रे बहुरि सके नहि आय।
रोम रोम नखसिख छबि निरखत ललकि रहे ललचाय॥
मैं ठाढ़ी गृह आपने री, मोहन निकसे आय।
बदन चन्द्र परकासत हेली, मंद मंद मुसकाय॥
लोक कुटुम्बि बरज बरजहिं, बतियाँ कहत बनाय।
चंचल निपट अटक नहिं मानत, पर हथ गयेबिकाय॥
भलो कहो कोई बुरो कहो मैं सब लई सीस चढ़ाय।
'मीरा' प्रभु गिरधरन लाल बिन पल छिन रह्यो न जाय ॥ ३ ॥

Item No. 19.

दरस बिन दूखन लागे नैन।
जब ते तुम बिछुरे पिव प्यारे, कबहुँ न पायो चैन॥
सबद सुनत मेरी छतियाँ काँपे, मीठे लागें बैन।
एक टक टकी पंथ निहारूं, भई छमासी रैन॥
बिरह बिथा का सूं कहूं सजनी, बह गई करवत ऐन।
"मीराँ" के प्रभु कब रे मिलोगे दुख मेटन सुखदैन ॥ ४ ॥

Item No. 20.

मैं विरहिन बैठी जागूं जगत सब सोवे री आली॥
बिरहिन बैठी रंग महल में मोतियन की लड़ पोवे।
एक बिरहिनि हम ऐसी देखी, अंसुअन माला पोवे॥
तारा गिन गिन रैन बिहानी, सुख की घड़ी कब आवे।
'मीरां' के प्रभु गिरधर नागर मिल के बिछुड़ न जावे ॥ ५ ॥

Item No. 21.

नींदलड़ी नहीं आवें सारी रात, किस बिंध होई परभात॥
चमक उठी सपने सुधि भूली, चंद्र कला न सोहात।
तलफ़ तलफ़ जिउ जाय हमारो, कब रे मिलें दीनानाथ॥
भई हूं दिवानी तन सुधि भूली, कोई न जानी म्हारी बात।
मीरा कहे बीती सोई जाने, मरण जीवन जिन हाथ ॥ ६ ॥

Item No. 22.

विरहिनि बावरी री भई ।।
सूने भवन पर ठाढ़ी होय के, टेरत हाय दई ।
दिन नहिं भूख रैन नहिं निदरा, भोजन भावन गई ।।
लेकर अंचरो अंसुवन पोंछे उघरे गात गई ।
मीरा कहे मन्मोहन प्यारे, जाताँ कछु ना कही ।। ७ ।।

Item No. 23.

भुवन पति तुम घर आज्यो हो ।
विया लगी तन मंहिने (म्हारी) तपत बुझाज्यो हो ।।
रोवत रोवत डोलतां सब रैण बिहावै हो ।
भूख गई निदरा गई पापी जीव न जावै हो ।।
दुखिया को सुखिया करो मोहि दरसन दीजो हो ।
मीरा व्याकुल विरहणी अब विलम्ब न कीजो हो ।। ८ ।।

Item No. 24.

नैनां मोरे बान पड़ी, साईं मोहे दरस दिखाई ।।
चित चढ़ी मेरी माधुरी मूरत, उर बिच आन अड़ी ।
कैसे प्राण पिया बिन राखूं, जीवण मूर जड़ी ।।
कब की ठाढ़ी पंथ निहारूं अपणे भवन खड़ी ।
'मीरा' प्रभु के हाथ बिकानी लोग कहें बिगड़ी ।। ९ ।।

Item No. 25.

सखी ! मेरी नींद नसानी हो ।
पिउ को पंथ निहारत सिगरी रैन बिहानी हो ।।
सब सखियन मिल सीख दई, मैं एक न मानी हो ।
बिन देखे कल नाहीपरत, जिए ऐसी ठानी हो ।।
अंग छीन व्याकुल भई, मुख पिउ पिउ बानी हो ।
अन्तर वेदन विरह की, वह पीर न जानी हो ।।
ज्यों चातक घन को रटे, मछरी जिमि पानी हो ।
'मीरां' व्याकुल विरहनी, सुधबुध बिसरानी हो ।। १० ।।

Item No. 26.

दे मां गिरधारी, मोहि दे मां गिरधारी ॥ टेक ॥
भूषण बसन मोहि नहिं भावें,
ना मांगं भवन अटारी ॥
गिरधर चरन कमल की सौगन्ध, मोहि प्रान न ते प्यारी ।
'मीरा' के प्रभु गिरधर नागर बार बार बलिहारी ॥ ११ ॥

Item No. 27.

म्हारे जनन मरण रा साथी थाने नहिं बिसरूं दिन राती ॥
थां देखां बिन कल न पड़त है जाणत मेरी छाती ।
ऊंची चढ़ चढ़ पंथ निहारूं रोय रोय अंखियां राती ॥
यो संसार सकल जग झूंठो झूठा कुल रा न्याती ।
दोय कर जोड़यां अरज करूं छूं सुन लीजो मेरी बाती ॥
यो मन मेरो बड़ो हरामी ज्यूं मदमातो हाथी ।
सतगुर हाथ धरयो सिर ऊपर अंकुस दे समझाती ॥
पल पल पिउ को रूप निहारूं निरख निरख सुख पाती ।
'मीरा' के प्रभु गिरधर नागर हरि चरणां चित राती ॥ १२ ॥

Item No. 28.

तुमरे कारण सब सुख छोडयो अब मोहि क्यों तरसावो हो ।
विरह विथा लागी उर अंतर सो तुम आय बुझावो हो ॥
अब छोड़त नहीं बणे प्रभुजो, हंस कर तुरत बुलावो हो ।
मीरा दासी जनम जनम की, अंग से अंग लगावो हो ॥ १३ ॥

Item No. 29.

प्यारे दरसन दीजो आय तुम बिन रह्यो न जाय ॥
जल बिन कमल चन्द बिन रजनी ऐसे तुम देख्यां बिन सजनी ।
आकुल व्याकुल फिरूं रैन दिन विरह कलेजो खाय ॥
दिवस न भूख नींद नहीं रैना, मुख सूं कथत न आवे बैना ।
कहा कहूं कछ कहत न आवे, मिल कर तपत बुझाय ॥

क्यों तरसाओं अंतरयामी, आय मिलो किरपा कर स्वामी।
मीरा दासी जनम जनम की, पड़ी तुम्हारे पाय ॥ २४ ॥

Item No. 30.

करुणा सुनो स्याम मेरी।
मैं तो होय रही चेरी तेरी ॥
दरसन कारण भई बावरी, बिरह बिथा तन घरी।
तेरे कारण जोगण हूंगी, दूंगी नगर बिच फेरी ॥
कुंज बन हेरी हेरी ॥
अंग भभूत गले मृगछाला, यो तन भस्म करू री।
अजहूं न मिल्या राम अविनासी बन बन बीच फिरुं री।
रोऊं नित टेरी टेरी ॥
जन मीरा कूं गिरधर मिलिया दुख मेटण सुख भेरी।
रूम रूम साँतां भई उर में मिट गई फेरा फेरी ॥
रहुं चरन न तर चेरी ॥ २५ ॥

Item No. 31.

मत जा मत जा मत जा, जोगी, पांव परूं मैं चेरी तेरी ॥
प्रेम भक्ति को पैंडो ही न्यारो, हम कूं गैल बता जा ॥
अगर चंदन की चिता रचाऊँ, अपने हाथ जला जा ॥
जल बल भई भस्म की ढेरी, अपने अंग लगा जा ॥
मीरा के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, ज्योति में ज्योति मिलाजा ॥ १६ ॥

Item No. 32.

तुम सुनो दयाल म्हांरी अरज़ी।
भवसागर में बही जात हूं, काढ़ो तो थांरी मरजी ॥
इस संसार सगो नहिं कोई साचा सगा रघुवर जी ॥
मात पिता औ कुटुम्ब कबीलो सब मतलब के गरजी ॥
मीरा की प्रभु अरजी सुन लो, चरण लगाओ थांरी मरज़ी ॥ १७ ॥

Item No. 33.

अब तो निभायां सरेगी बांह गहे की लाज ।।
समरथ सरण तुम्हारी सईयां सरब सुधारण काज ।।
भवसागर संसार अपरबल जा में तुम हो जहाज ।।
निरधारां आधार जगत गुरू तुम बिन होय अकाज ।।
जुग जुग भीर हरी भक्तन की दीनी मोक्ष समाज ।।
'मीरा' सरण गही चरणन की लाज रखो महाराज ।।१८।।

Item No. 34.

थे तो पलक उघाडो दीना नाथ, मैं हाज़िर नाज़िर कद की खड़ी ।।
साजनियां दुसमन होय बैठ्यां, सब ने लगूं कड़ी ।।
तुम बिन साजन कोई नहीं है, डिगी नाव मेरी समंद अड़ी ।।
दिन नहिं चैन रैन नहिं निदरा, सूखूं खड़ी खड़ी ।।
वाण विरह का लग्या हिय में, भूलूं न एक घड़ी ।।
पत्थर की तो अहिल्या तारी, बन के बीच पड़ी ।
कहा बोझ मीरा में कहिये, सौ ऊपर एक घड़ी । ।।१९।।

Item No. 35.

स्याम मने चाकर राखो जी ।
गिरधारिलाल चाकर राखो जी ।।
चाकर रहसूं बाग़ लगा सूं नित उठ दरसन पासूं ।
बृन्दावन की कुन्ज गलिन में तेरी लीला गासूं ।।
चाकरी में दरसण पाऊं सुमिरण पाऊं ख़रची ।
भाव भक्ति जागीरी पाऊं तीनों बातां सरसी ।।
मोर मुगट पीताम्बर सोहै, गल बैजन्ती माला ।
बृन्दावन में धेनु चरावे, मोहन मुरली वाला ।।
हरे हरे नित बाग़ लगाऊं बिच बिच राखूं क्यारी ।
सांवरिया के दरसण पाऊं, पहर कुसुम्मी सारी ।।

जोगी आया जोग करण कूं, तप करणे सन्यासी।
हरि भजन कूं साधु आया, वृन्दावन के बासी॥
'मीरा' के प्रभु गहिर गंभीरा, सदा रहो जी धीरा।
आधी रात प्रभु दरसन दीन्हें, प्रेम नदी के तीरा ॥ २० ॥

Item No. 36.

मेरो मन हरि सूं जोरयों हरि सूं जोर सकल सूं तोरयो॥
मेरी प्रीत निरंतर हरि सु ज्यूं खेलत बाजीगर गोरयो।
जब मैं चली साध के दरसन तब राणा मारण को दौरयो॥
जहर देन की घात बिचारी निरमल जल में ले बिष घोरयो
जब चरणोदक सुण्यो सर बणा, राम भरोसे मुख में ढोरयो॥
नाचन लगी जब धूंघट कैसा लोक लाज तिणकाज्यूं तोरयो।
नेकी बदी हूं सिर पर धारी मन हस्ती अंकुश दे मोरयो
प्रकट निसान बजाय चली में राणा राव सकल जग जोरयो।
'मीरा' सबल धणी के सरणे, कहा भयो भूपति मुख मोरयो॥
॥ २१ ॥

Item No. 37.

मेरो मन लागो हरि जी सूं, अब न रहूंगी अटकी ॥ टेक ॥
गुरु मिलिया रैदास जी, दीन्ही ज्ञान की गुटकी।
चोट लगी निज नाम हरि की, म्हांरे हिउड़े खटकी॥
मोती माणिक परत न पहिरूं, मैं कब की नटकी।
गैणो तो म्हांरो माला दोवड़ी और चंदन की कुटकी॥
राज कुल की लाज गमाई, साधां के संग भटकी।
नित उठ हरि जी के मन्दिर जास्यां, नाचां देदे चुटकी॥
भाग्य खुला म्हांरा साध संगत सूं सांवरिया की बटकी।
जेठ बहू की काण न मानूं घूंघट पूट गई पटकी॥
परम गुरां के सरन में रहस्यां, परणाम करां लुटकी।
मीरां के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, जनम मरन सूं छुटकी ॥ २२ ॥

Item No. 38.

तू मत बरजै माईड़ी साधां दरसन जाती।
राम नाम हिरदै बसै मांहिले मन माती॥
माइ कहे सुन धीहड़ी तू कहे गुण फूली।
लोक सोवे सुख नींदड़ो थूं क्यूं रैणज भूळी॥
गैली दुनिया बावळी ज्यां कूं राम न भावे।
ज्यां रे हिरदे हरि बसे त्यां कूं नींद न आवे॥
चौमास्यां की बावड़ी ज्यां कूं नीर न पीजे।
हरि नाले अमृत झरे ज्यां की आस करीजे॥
रूप सुरंगा राम जी मुख निरखत जीजे।
मीरां व्याकुल विरहणी अपणी कर लीजे ॥ २३ ॥

Item No. 39.

घर आंगण न सुहावे पिया बिन मोहि न भावे॥
दीपक जोय कहा करूं सजनी! पिय परदेस रहावे।
सूनी सेज जहर ज्यूं लागे, सिसक सिसक जिय जावे॥
नैण निद्रा नहिं आवे॥
कद की ऊभी मैं मग जोऊं, निस दिन विरह सतावे॥
कहा कहूं कछु कहत न आवे, हिवडो अति अकुलावे।
हरि कब दरस दिखावे॥
ऐसो है कोई परम सनेही, तुरत सनेसो लावे।
वा बिरियां कद होसी मुझको, हरि हंस कंठ लगावे॥
मीरा मिल होरी गावे॥ ॥ २४ ॥

Item No. 40.

म्हारे सिर पर सालिगराम, राणा जी म्हारो कांई करसी॥
मीरा सूं राणा ने कही रे, सुण मीरा म्हारी बात।
साधां की संगत छोड़ देरे, सखियां सब सकुचात ॥ १ ॥
मीरा ने सुन यों कही रे, सुन राणा जी बात।
साध तो माई बाप हमारे, सखियां क्यों घबरात ॥ २ ॥

जहर का प्याला भेजियो रे, दीजो मीरा हाथ।
अमृत करके पी गई रे, भली करैं दीनानाथ ॥ ३ ॥
मीरा प्याला पी लिया रे, बोली दोउ कर जोर।
तैं तो मारण की करी रे, मेरो राखणहारो और ॥ ४ ॥
आधे जोहड़ कीच है रे, आधे जोहड़ हौज।
आधे मीरा एकली रे, आधे राणा की फौज ॥ ५ ॥
काम क्रोध को डाल के रे, सील लिए हथियार।
जीती मीरा एकली रे, हारी राणा की धार ॥ ६ ॥
काचगिरी का चौतरा रे, बैठे साध पचास।
जिन में मीरा ऐसी दमके, नव लख तारों में परकास ॥ ७ ॥
टांडा जब वे लादिया रे, बेगी दीन्हा जाण।
कुल को तारण अस्तरी रे, चली है पुष्कर न्हाण ॥ ८ ॥
॥ २५ ॥

Item No. 41.

मैं रोई रोई अंखियां राती करूं।
राती करूं गीत गाती चलूं ॥
अन्य कोई मारी नजरे न आवे।
वर तो गिरधारी ने वरूं ॥
सेवा ने सुमरण ऐनुंज निश दिन।
हृदयकमल मां ध्यान धरूं ॥
मीरां कहे प्रभु गिरधर नागर।
गंगा जमुना नहाती फिरूं ॥ २६ ॥

Item No. 42.

राणाजी मोहे यह बदनामी लागत मीठी।
कोई निन्दो कोई बिन्दो मैं चलूंगी चाल अनूठी ॥
सांकड़ी गली में सतगुरु मिलिया क्यों कर फिरूं अपूठी।
सतगुरु जी सों बातज करतां, दुरजन लोगां ने दीठी।
मीरां के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, दुरजन जलो जा अंगीठी ॥ २९ ॥

Item No. 43.

प्यारे के कच बिथुरे मानो धराधर की श्याम घटा
उनई मध्य पुहुप छूटि परै जैसे बड़ी बड़ी बूंदें।
तामधि मुक्त बग पांति तरौना अलक बीच बिज्जुलता सी
कौंधनी नेत्र खञ्जन री कबोलनि बोलें रूंदें॥
लाल सारि पहरे हरी कोर मघवा घन सी घुंघट करिचली पीठ
पाछे ते,
तरके लाल मुनियां सी कंचुकी तनी की फूंदें।
मेंहदी सो आरक्त नख बीर बहूटी ऐसी पावस बनिता मिली
'मीरा' गिरधर खुले काम प्रीति काम हार गूंदे ॥ २४॥

Item No. 44.

चालां वाही देस प्रीतम पावां, चालां वाही देस।
कहो तो कुसूमल साड़ी रंगावां कहो तो भगुवा भेस॥
कहो तो मोतियन मांग भरावां कहो छिटकावां केस।
मीरां के प्रभु गिरधर नागर सुण गयो विड़द नरेस ॥ २८॥

Item No. 45.

बरजी मैं काहू की नाहिं रहूं।
सुणो री सखी तुम चेतन होय कै मन की बात कहूं।
साधु संगति कर हरि सुख लेऊं जग सूं दूर रहूं॥
तन धन मेरो सब ही जाओ भल मेरो सीस लहूं।
मन मेरो लागो सुमरन सेती सब के मैं बोल सहूं।
मीरा के प्रभु हरि अविनासी सतगुरू शरण गहूं ॥ ३०॥

Item No. 46.

जल्दी ख़बर लेना मेहरम मेरी॥
जलबिना मीन मरे एक छिन में।
एने अमृत पाओ तो य भेरी भेरी॥
बहोत दिनां का बिछोह घड़ा है।
अब तो राखो नेड़ी नेड़ी॥

चकोर को ध्यान लगा चंदवा सूं।
नटवा को ध्यान लगा डोरी डोरी॥
संत को ध्यान लग्यो राम प्यारे।
मूरख को ध्यान लग्यो 'मेरी मेरी'॥
मीरा के प्रभु गिरधर नागर।
तुम पर सुरत मेरी ठैरी ठैरी ॥ ३१ ॥

Item No. 47.

दो दिन का मिजमान
बिगाड़ूं किस से, दो दिन का मिजमान॥
अब तू सोवत सेज पलंग पर
कल तू जाओगे मसान॥
माता पिता सुत नारी छोड़ के
आख़र होत हैरान॥
राज भी चल गये प्रधान भी चल गये
कुंभ करण बलवान॥
कीट पतंग और ब्रह्मा भी चल गये
कोई न रहेगा अवसान॥
बाई मीरां कहे प्रभु गिरधरना गुण
रख ले तू राम को ध्यान ॥ ३२ ॥

Item No. 48.

धिक है जग में जीवन जा को भजन बिना देह धारी॥
जब माता की कूक जन्मयो, आनंद हर्ष उचारी।
जग में आय भजन ना कीन्हो जननी को भारे मारी॥
काग़ कोयल तो सब रंग एके, कोई गोरी कोई कारी।
वो बोले तक तीरज मारे, वो बोले जग प्यारी॥
बागल तो शिर औंधे झूले वा की कौन बिचारी।
फल सब कोई करणी का चाखे मानो बात हमारी॥

जूनो सी नाव मळा खेवटिया भव सागर बहु भारी।
मीरा कहे प्रभु गिरधरना गुण मोनुं पार उतारो ॥ ३३ ॥

Item No. 49.

हरि मने पार उतार नमो नमो विनती करुं छूं॥
जगत मां जन्मी ने बहु दुख देख्या, संसार शोक निवार॥
कष्ट आवे मने कर्मनां बंधन, दूर तू कर करतार॥
यो संसार बह्यो बह्यो जाये छे, लख चौराशी धार॥
मीरां कहे प्रभु गिरधर नागर, आवागवन निवार ॥ ३४ ॥

Item No. 50.

करना फ़क़ीरी तब क्या दिलगीरी, सदा मगन में रहना जी॥
कोई दिन गाड़ी ने कोई दिन बंगला, कोई दिन जंगल बसना जी॥
कोई दिन हस्ती ने कोई दिन घोड़ा, कोई दिन पांव घसना जी॥
कोई दिन खाजा ने कोई दिन लाडू, कोई दिन फ़ाक़म फ़ाक़ा जी॥
कोई दिन ढोलिया कोई दिन तलाई, कोई दिन भोई पै लोटना जी॥
मीरा कहै प्रभु गिरधरना गुण, कछु आय पड़े सो सहना जी ॥ ३५ ॥

Item No. 51.

मेरो मन रामहि राम रटै रे॥
राम नाम जप लीजै प्राणी, कोटिक पाप कटै रे।
जनम जनम के खत जु पुराने, नाम हि लेत फटै रे॥
कनक कटोरे अम्रत भरियो, पीवत कौन नटै रे।
'मीरा' कहै प्रभु हरि अविनासी, तन मन ताहि पटै रे ॥ ३६ ॥

Item No. 52.

मेरे मन राम नाम बसी।
तेरे कारण स्याम सुंदर सकल लोगां हंसी॥
कोई कहे मीरा भई है बावरी, कोई कहे कुल नसी।
कोई कहे मीरा दीप आगरी, नाम पिया सूं रसी॥

खांड धार भक्ति की न्यारी, काटि है जम फंसी।
मीरा के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, सब्द सरोवर धसी ॥ ३९ ॥

Item No. 53.

पायो जी म्हे तो नाम रतन धन पायो।
वस्तु अमोलक दी म्हारे, सतगुरू किरपा कर अपनायो॥
जनम जनम की पूंजी पाई, जग में सभी खोवायो।
खरचै नहिं कोई चोर न लेवै, दिन दिन बढ़त सवायो॥
सत की नाव खेवटिया सतगुरू, भवसागर तर आयो।
'मीरा' के प्रभु गिरधरनागर, हरख हरख जस गायो ॥ ३७ ॥

Item No. 54.

पिया तेरे नाम लुभाणी हो।
नाम लेत तिरता सुण्या जैसे पाहण पाणी हो॥
सुकृत कोई न कियो, बहु करम कुमाणी हो।
गणिका कीर पढ़ावतां, वैकुण्ठ बेसाणी हो॥
अरध नाम कुंजर लियो, वा की अवध घटाणी हो।
गरुड़ छांड हरि धाइया, पसु जूण मिटाणी हो॥
अजामिळ से ऊधरे, जम त्रास नसाणी हो।
पुत्र हेत पदवी दई, जग सारे जाणी हो॥
नाम महातम गुरू दियो, परतीत पिछाणी हो।
मीरा दासी रावली, अपणी कर जाणी हो ॥ ३७ ॥

Item No. 55.

जो तुम तोड़ो पिया मैं नहीं तोड़ूं
तुम सों प्रीत तोड़ कृष्ण, कौन संग जोड़ूं॥
तुम भये तरूवर मैं भई पंखिया।
तुम भये सरवर मैं तेरी मछिया॥
तुम भये गिरवर मैं भई मोरा।
तुम भये चंदा मैं भई चकोरा॥

तुम भये मोती प्रभु हम भये धागा।
तुम भये सोना हम भये सोहागा॥
मीरा कहे प्रभु ब्रज के बासी।
तुम मेरे ठाकुर मैं तेरी दासी ॥४०॥

Item No. 56.

गोविन्द गाव मन गोविन्द गाव।
राम कृष्ण भजवानो आव्यो छे दाव॥
दुर्लभ नर देही तमे तत्पर भाव।
भवसागर तरवाने बेसवा ने नाव॥
भगवत कथा सांभलो ने हृदय राखो भाव।
सत्संग रूपी गंगा मां प्रेमे करी न्हाव॥
बाई मीरा कहे तमे हरिजन थाव।
हरि के चरण में चित्त लगाव ॥४१॥

Item No. 57.

हरिजन धोबिया वे मैल मना दी धोय।
ऐसी धोवन धोवी वे धोबी आवागौन न होय॥
सुरत साबुन निरत जल कर खिमा सांति समोय।
सुखमना के घाट धोबी धोइ निरमल होय॥
मन सुआ तन पिंजरा बिच आय बसिया सोय।
दासि मीरा लाल गिरधर जीवन न दिन दोय ॥४२॥

Item No. 58.

गली तो चारों बंद हुई मैं हरि से मिलूं कैसे जाय?
ऊंची नीची राह रपटीली, पाँव नहीं ठहराय।
सोच सोच पग धरूं जतन से बार बार डिग जाय।
ऊंचा नीचा महल पिया का म्हांसूं चढ़यो न जाय।
पिया दूर पंथ म्हारो झीणो, सुरत झकोला खाय॥

कोस कोस पर पहरा बैठ्या पैंड पैंड बटमार।
हे विधना कैसी रच दीनी, दूर बसायो म्हांरो गांव॥
मीरां के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, सत्गुरु दई बताय।
जुगन जुगन से बिछड़ी मीरा, घर में लीनी लाय ॥४३॥

Item No. 59.

हे री मैं तो प्रेम दिवानी, मेरो दरद न जाने कोय॥
सूली ऊपर सेज हमारी, किस बिध सोना होय।
गगन मंडल पर सेज पिया की, किस बिध मिलना होय॥
घायल की गति घायल जाने, की जिन लागी होय।
जौहरी की गति जौहरी जाने, की जिन जौहर होय॥
दरद की मारी बन बन डोलूं वैद मिल्यो नहीं कोय।
मीरां के प्रभु पीर मिटे जद वैद्य सांवलिया होय ॥४४॥

III. ANDAL

Bengali Songs

Item No. 60.

(कृष्णेर भ्रमे मेघेर प्रति):--

एस एस गोपीर जीवन! मने पड़ेछे बूझि वन, एस देखे जुड़ाई
जीवन जे 'ह' ते गेंछ त्यजि वन, तखन जेन ए जीवन
ओष्ठगत ह'येत जीवन, केवल दे'खव ब' ले जायनि जीवन।
कि भाविये मने दाँडा' ये उखाने एस हे
एक बार निकुञ्ज कानने कर पदार्पण।
'एक बार' आसिये समक्षे देखिले स्वचक्षे जानवे
'सवे' कत दुःखे रक्षे क' रेछि जीवन
भाल भाल बंधु! भाल त' आछिले?
भाल समय, भाल एसे देखा दिले।
'आर' क्षनेक परे देखा दिले प्राण सखा, देखा हत ना,
'तोमार' विरहे सवार ह'त जे मरण।
आमार मत तोमार अनेक रमणी
तोमार मत आमार तुमि गुण मणि।
जे मन दिनमणिर कत कमलिनी
'किन्तु' कमलिनी गणेर ए एकई दिनमणि।
नेत्र पलके जे निन्दे विधाता के
एत व्याजे देखा साजे कि हे ताके।
बंधु' जा हेक् देखा ह'ल दुःख दूरे गेल, जाक हे,
'एखन' गत कथार आर नाहि प्रयोजन
'आमार' हृदय कमले राखिय श्रीं पद
तिल आध बं'स ब'स हे श्री पद
ना सेविये पद ह'ल जे विपद
से विपद घुचाइव सेवि पद।

यद्यपि विरहे तापित हृदय
ताहे तापित ना हवे पदद्वय,
कोटि शशि शीतल ह'तेउ सुशीतल तोमार पदतल,
एक बार परशे शीतल हईवे एखन ॥ . . . . . .

धीरे धीरे (मेघेर ! गमन)

सखि ! धर झट पीतपट निपट कपट शठ
लम्पट शिरोमणि जाय । . . . . . .

(मेघेर प्रस्थान—सकातर भावे)

गेल गेल सखि ! हाय हाय श्याम के धरा गेल ना ।
धरा गेल ना, दुःख आर गेल ना ;
गेल ना गेल ना तवु प्राण त गेल ना ।
बंधु गेल ऊपेखिये प्राग र' ल आर कि देखिये,
कि हवे जीवन राखिये ;—
मरि मरि सहचरि ! कि करि ताइबल ना ॥
विधि जदि पाखा दिल उड़े गेले धरा जे'त,
ता ह' ले कि बंधु जेत ;
एमन दारुण विधि ताऊ त दिल ना ॥

(मेघेर गमन पथ पाने चाहिया)

उहे तिलके दांडाउ दांडाउ हे,
अमन क' रे जाउया उचित ने ॥
दांडाउ हे दुःखिनीर बंधु ! तिलके दांडाउ ।
जे जार शरण लय, निठुर बंधु !
'बंधु' तारे कि बधिते हय हे ;—तिलके दांडाउ । . . . .

(पुनः)

तुमि जेउ जथा सुख पाउ
अभागिनीर मुखेर कथा शुने जाउ हे ॥
'बंधु' ! मोरा म'रे जाई ताय क्षति नाई
प्रेमेर कलंक हवे

'बलि' शुनि हे केशव ब' लोवे लोके सब
प्रेम क'रे म'ल गोपिका सबे।
आर एक दुःख शुन हे कई तवे
अकैतव भावे घटा' ले कैतवे (एइ हवे हे)
'बंधु' जंबुनद हेम सम जेई प्रेम
हेन प्रेमेर नाम आर केउ न लवे॥ . . . . . .

(भावावेशे पुन:)

एक वार विधुवदन तुले चाउ
—(जन्मेर मत देखे लई हे नाथ)—
गोपी गणेर प्रेमेर मरण देखे जाउ हे॥

(श्री राधिकार मूर्च्छा)

—कृष्ण कमल गीतिकाव्य (बंगला)–श्री कामिनीकुमार प्रणीत–पृष्ठ १२८

Item No. 61.

(1 - Footnote)

के तुमि श्यामेर डाक, राधा यथा डाके–हा हा कार रवे?
के तुमि, कोन युवती, डाक ए बिरले सति?
अनाथा राधिका यथा डाके गो माधवे।
अभय हृदये तुमि कह आसि मोरे।
के न बांधाए जगते श्याम प्रेम डोरे?—
बूझि लाम एत क्षणे के तुमि डाकिछु, आकाश नन्दिनि!
परवत गहन बने वास तव, वरानने
सदारंग रसे तुमिरत—हे रङ्गिणि।
निराकारा भारति, के ना जाने तोमारे।
एसेछ कि कांदिते गो लईए राधारे?
जानि आमि हे सजनि भाल बास तुमि, मोर श्याम घने॥
शुनि मुरारिर वंशी गाइते गो तुमि आसि,
शिखिया श्यामेर गति मञ्जु कुञ्ज बने।

राधा राधा बलि जबे डाकि तेन हरि—
राधा राधा बलि तुमि डाकिते सुन्दरि ॥ १ ॥

Item No. 62.

(2 - Footnote)

मृदु कलेवरे तुमि ओ हे शैवालिनि
कि कहिछ भाल क, रे कह ना आमारे।
सागर विरहे यदि प्राण तव कांदे नदि।
तोमार मनेर कथा कह राधिकारे।
तुमि कि जान ना धनि से ओ विरहनि ॥ २ ॥

Item No. 63.

(3 - Footnote)

तरू शाखा ऊपरे शिखिनि।
केन लो बसिया तुई विरस बदने ?
ना हेरिया श्याम चांदे तोरा कि पराण कांदे
तुई ओ कि दुखिनी।
आहा ! के ना भाल वासे राधिकारमणे ?
कार ना जुड़ाय आंखि शशि विहङ्गिनि ?
आय पारवी आमरा दु जने
गला धरा धरि करि भावि लो नीरवे।
नवीन नीरदे प्राण तुई करेछिस दान
स कि तारे हबे ?
आर कि पाईब राधिका रञ्जने ?
तुइ भाव घने धनि आमि माधवे ॥ ३ ॥

Item No. 64.

(4 - Footnote) (Hindi Song)

सखि री चातक मोहि जिआवत

जैसेहि रैन रटति हौ पिय पिय तैसेहि वह पुनि पुनि गावत ॥
अतिहि सुकण्ठ दाहु प्रीतम को तारू जीभ न लावत ।
आपु न पिवत सुधारस सजनी विरहनि बोलि पिआवत ॥
जो ये पंछी सहाय न होते प्राण बहुत दुःख पावत ।
जीवन सफल 'सूर' ता ही को जो काज पराये आवत ॥ ४ ॥

IV. JAIDEO

Sanskrit Songs

Item No. 65.

सञ्चरदधर सुधा मधुर ध्वनि मुखरित मोहन वंशम् ।
चलित दृगञ्चलचञ्चल मौलि कपोल विलोलवतंसम् ॥
रासे हरिमिह विहित विलासम् ।
स्मरति मनो मम कृत परिहासम् ॥ ॥ ध्रु० १ ॥
चंद्रक चारू मयूर शिखण्डक मण्डल वलयित केशम् ।
प्रचुर पुरन्दर धनुरनु रञ्जित मेदुर मुदिर सुवेशम् ॥ २ ॥
गोप कदम्ब नितम्बवती मुख चुम्बन लम्बित लोभम् ।
बन्धु जीव मधुराधर पल्लवमुल्लसित स्मित शोभम् ॥ ३ ॥
विपुल पुलक भुज पल्लव वलयित वल्लव युवति सहस्रम् ।
कर चरणोरसि मणि गण भूषण किरण विभिन्नतमिस्रम् ॥ ४ ॥
जलद पटल चलदिन्दु विनिन्दक चंदन बिन्दु ललाटम् ।
पीन पयोधर परिसर मर्दन निर्दय हृदय कपाटम् ॥ ५ ॥
मणिमय मकर मनोहर कुण्डल मण्डित गण्डमुदारम् ।
पीत वसनमनुगत मुनि मनुज सुरासुर वर परिवारम् ॥ ६ ॥
विशम कदम्बतले मिलितं कलि कलुष भयं शमयन्तम् ।
मामपि किमपि तरङ्गदनङ्ग दृशा मनसा रमयन्तम् ॥ ७ ॥
श्री जयदेव भणितमति सुंदर मोहन मधुरिपु रूपम् ।
हरिचरण स्मरणं प्रति संप्रति पुण्यवतामनुरूपम् ॥ ८ ॥

Item No. 66.

मामियं चलिता विलोक्य वृतं वधूनिचयेन ।
सापराधतया मया न निवारितातिभयेन ॥
हरि हरि हतादरतया गता सा कुपितेव ॥ ध्रु० १

किं करिष्यति किं वदिष्यति सा चिरं विरहेण। ॥ २ ॥
किं धनेन जनेन किं मम किं सुखेन गृहेण
चिन्तयामि तदाननं कुटिल भ्रु कोपभरेण। ॥ ३ ॥
शोण पद्ममिवोपरि भ्रमताकुलम्भ्रमरेण
तानहं हृदि सङ्गतामनिशं भृशं रमयामि। ॥ ४ ॥
किं वनेऽनुसरामि तामिह किं वृथा विलपामि
तन्वि खिन्नमसूयया हृदयन्तवाकलयामि। ॥ ५ ॥
तन्नवेद्मि कुतो गतासि न तेन तेऽनुनयामि
दृश्यसे पुरतोगतागतमेव किं विदधासि। ॥ ६ ॥
किं पुरेव ससंभ्रमं परिरम्भणं न ददासि
क्षम्यतामपरं कदापि तवे दृशं न करोमि। ॥ ७ ॥
देहि सुन्दरि दर्शनं मम मन्मथेन दुनोमि
वर्णितं जयदेवकेन हरेरिदं प्रणतेन। ॥ ८ ॥
केन्दुविल्व समुद्र सम्भव रोहिणी रमणेन

Item No. 67.

स्तन विनिहितमपि हारमुदारम्।
सा मनुते कृशतनुरिव भारम्॥
राधिका विरहे तव केशव ॥ ध्रु० ॥ १ ॥
सरसमसृणमपि मलयजपङ्कम्।
पश्यति विषमिव वपुषि सशङ्कम् ॥ २ ॥
श्वसित पवनमनुपम परिणाहम्।
मदन दहनमिव दहति सदाहम् ॥ ३ ॥
दिशि दिशि किरति सजल कणजालम्।
नयन नलिनमिव विगलित नालम् ॥ ४ ॥
नयस विषयमपि किसलयतल्पम्।
कलयति विहित हुताशन कल्पम् ॥ ५ ॥
त्यजति न पाणि तलेन कपोलम्।
बालशशिनमिव सायम लोलम् ॥ ६ ॥

हरिरिति हरिरिति जपति सकामम्।
विरह विहित मरणेव निकामम् ॥ ७ ॥
श्री जयदेव भणितमिति गीतम्।
सुखयतु केशव पदमुपनीतम् ॥ ८ ॥

Item No. 68.

वदसि यदि किञ्चिदपि दंतरुचि कौमुदी
हरति दरतिमिरमति घोरम्।
स्फुरदधर सीधवे तव वदन चंद्रमा
रोचयतिलोचन चकोरम्॥
प्रियेचारु शीले मुञ्च मयि मान मनिदानम्।
सपदि मदनानलोदहति मम मानसं देहि मुख कमलमधुपानम्
॥ ध्रु० ॥ १ ॥

सत्यमेवासि यदि सुदति मयि कोपिनी
देहि खर नयन शर घातम्।
घटय भुज बंधनं जनय रद खण्डनं
येन वा भवति सुख जातम् ॥ २ ॥
त्वमसि मम भूषणं त्वमसि मम जीवनं
त्वमसि मम जलधि रतनम्।
भवतु भवतीह मयि सततमनुकोपिनी
तत्र मम हृदय मति यतनम् ॥ ३ ॥
नीलनलिनाभमपि तन्वि तव लोचनम्
धारयति कोकनद रूपम्।
कुसुम शरबाण भावेन यदि रंजयसि
कृष्णमिदमेतदनुरूपम् ॥ ४ ॥
स्फुरतु कुचकुम्भयोरूपरि मणिमञ्जरी
रंजयतु तव हृदयदेशम्।
रसतुरशनापि तव घन जघन मण्डले
घोषयतु मन्मथ निदेशम् ॥ ५ ॥

स्थल कमल गंजनं मम हृदय रंजनं
जनित रति रंग परिभागम् ।
भणमसृणवाणि करवाणि चरणद्वयम्
सरस लसदलक्तक रागम् ॥ ६ ॥
स्मर गरल खण्डनं मम शिरसिमण्डनं
देहि पद पल्लवमुदारम् ।
ज्वलति मयि दारुणो मदन कदनानलो
हरतु तदुपहित विकारम् ॥ ७ ॥
इति चटुल चाटु पटु चारु मुरवैरिणो
राधिकामधिवचन जातम् ।
जयति पद्मावती रमण जयदेव कवि
भारती भणितमति शातम् ॥ ८ ॥

V. BILWAMANGAL

Sanskrit Shlokas from *Sri Krishnakarnamrita*

Item No. 69.

तेजसेऽस्तु नमो धेनु पालिने लोकपालिने।
राधापयोधरोत्सङ्ग शायिने शेषशायिने ॥ १ ॥

Item No. 70.

वरमिममुपदेशमाद्रियध्वं।
निगमवनेषु नितान्तचारखिन्नः ॥
विचिनुत भवनेषु वल्लवीना
मुपनिषदर्थमुलूखले निबद्धम् ॥ २ ॥

Item No. 71.

कदम्ब मूले क्रीडन्तं
वृन्दावन निवेशितम्।
पद्मासनस्थितं वन्दे
वेणुं गायन्तमच्युतम् ॥ ३ ॥

Item No. 72.

मारः स्वयं नु मधुरद्युतिमण्डलं नु
माधुर्यमेव नु मनोनयनामृतं नु।
वाणीमृजा नु मम जीवित वल्लभो नु
बालोऽयमभ्युदयते मम लोचनाय ॥ ४ ॥

Item No. 73.

प्रेमदं च मे कामदं च मे
वेदनं च मे वैभवं च मे
जीवनं च मे जीवितं च मे
दैवतं च मे देव नापरम् ॥ ५ ॥

Item No. 74.

भवनं भुवनं विलासिनी श्री—
स्तनय स्तामरसासनः स्मरश्च ।
परिचारपरम्परा सुरेन्द्रा—
स्तदपि त्वच्चरितं विभो विचित्रम् ॥ ६ ॥

Item No. 75.

संसारं किं सारं
कंसारेश्चरणकमलपरिभजनम् ।
ज्योतिः किमन्धकारे
यदन्धकारे रनुस्मरणम् ॥ ७ ॥

Item No. 76.

यद्वेणुश्रेणि रूपस्थित सुषिरमुखोद्गीर्गनाद प्रभिन्ना
एणाक्ष्य स्तत्क्षणेन त्रुटितनिजपति प्रेमबन्धाबभूवुः ।
अस्तव्यस्तालकान्ताः स्फुरदधरकुच द्वन्द्वनाभिप्रदेशाः
कामावेशप्रकर्ष प्रकटितपुलकाः पातु पीताम्बरो नः ॥ ८ ॥

Item No. 77.

मन्दं मन्दं मधुरनिनदैर्वेणुमापूरयन्तं
बृन्दं बृन्दावनभुवि गवां चारयन्तं चरन्तम् ।
छन्दोभागे शतमखमखध्वंसिनां दानवानां
हन्तारं तं कथय रसने ! गोपकन्याभुजङ्गम् ॥ ९ ॥

Item No. 78.

अपि जनुषि परस्मिन्नात्तपुण्यो भवेयं
तटभुवि यमुनाया स्तादृशो बंशनालः ।
अनुभवति यएवश्श्रीमदाभीरसूनो—
रधरमणिसमीपन्यासधन्यामवस्थाम् ॥ १० ॥

Item No. 79.

पुरः प्रसन्नेन मुखेन्दुतेजसा
पुरोऽवतीर्णस्य कृपा महाम्बुधेः ।
तदेव लीला मुरलीरवामृतं
समाधिविघ्नाय कदानु मे भवेत् ॥ ११ ॥

Item No. 80.

हे देव ! हे दयित ! हे जगदेकबन्धो
हे कृष्ण ! हे चपल ! हे करुणैकसिन्धो ।
हे नाथ ! हे रमण ! हे नयनाभिराम
हा हा कदानु भवितासि पदं दृशोर्मे ॥ १२ ॥

Item No. 81.

सन्ध्यावन्दन भद्रमस्तु भवते भोः स्नान तुभ्यं नमो
भोदेवाः पितरश्च तर्पणविधौ नाहं क्षमः क्षम्यताम् ।
यत्र क्वापि निषीद्ययादवकुलोत्तंसस्य कंसद्विषः
स्मारं स्मारमघं हरामि तदलं मन्ये किमन्येन मे ॥ १३ ॥

Item No. 82.

तत्कैशोरं तच्च वक्त्रारविन्दं
तत्कारुण्यं ते च लीलाकटाक्षाः ।
तत्सौन्दर्यं सा च मन्दास्मित श्रीः
सत्यं सत्यं दुर्लभं दैवतेषु ॥ १४ ॥

Item No. 83.

मार मवास मदीय मानसे
माधवैकनिलये यदृच्छया ।
श्री रमापतिरिहागमे दसौ
कः सहेत निजवेश्मलंघनम् ॥ १५ ॥

Item No. 84.

एषु प्रवाहेषु स एव मन्ये
क्षणोऽपि गण्यः पुरुषायुषेषु ।
आस्वाद्यते यत्र कयापि भक्तया
नीलस्य बालस्य निजं चरित्रम् ॥ १६ ॥

Item No. 85.

भक्तिस्त्वयि स्थिरतरा भगवन् यदि स्या-
द्दैवेन नः फलितदिव्य किशोर वेषे ।
मुक्तिः स्वयं मुकुलिताञ्जलि सेवतेऽस्मान्
धर्मार्थिकामगतयः समय प्रतीक्षः । ॥ १७ ॥

Item No. 86.

किमिव शृणुमः कस्य ब्रूमः कथं कृतमाशया
कथयत कथं धन्या मन्यामहे हृदयेशयम् ।
मधुर मधुर स्मेराकारे मनोनयनोत्सवे
कृपणकृपणा कृष्णे तृष्णा चिरं बत लम्बते ॥ १८ ॥

Item No. 87.

बहुल चिकुर भारं बद्धपिञ्छावतंसं
चपल चपल नेत्रं चारुबिम्बाधरोष्ठम् ।
मधुर मृदुलहासं मन्थरोदार लीलं
मृगयति नयनं मे मुग्धवेषं मुरारेः ॥ १९ ॥

Item No. 88.

मयि प्रसादं मधुरैः कटाक्षै-
र्वंशीनिनादानुचरैर्विधेहि ।
त्वयि प्रसन्ने किमिहा परै र्न
स्त्वय्यप्रसन्ने किमिहापरै र्नः ॥ २० ॥

Item No. 89.

राधा पुनातु जगदच्युतदत्तचित्ता
मन्थान माकलयती दधिरिक्तपात्रे।
तस्याः स्तन स्तबकचञ्चल लोलदृष्टि-
र्देवोऽपि दोहनधिया वृषभं निरुन्धन् ॥ २१ ॥

Item No. 90.

गोधूलिधूसरित कोमलकुन्तलाग्रं
गोवर्धनोद्धरण केलिकृत प्रयासम्।
गोपी जनस्य कुच कुङ्कम मुद्रिताङ्गम्
गोविन्दमिन्दुवदनं शरणं भजामः ॥ २२ ॥

Item No. 91.

विक्रेतु कामा किल गोपकन्या
मुरारिपादार्पितचित्तवृत्तिः।
दध्याधिकं मोहवशादवोच-
द्गोविन्द दामोदर माधवेति ॥ २३ ॥

Item No. 92.

उलूखलं वा यमिनां मनो वा
गोपाङ्गनानां कुचकुट्मलं वा।
मुरारिनाम्नः कलभस्य नून-
मालानमासित्त्रयमेव भूमौ ॥ २४ ॥

Item No. 93.

अङ्गना मङ्गनामन्तरे माधवो
माधवं माधवं चान्तरेणाङ्गना।
इत्थमाकल्पिते मण्डलेमध्यगः
सञ्जगौ वेणुना देवकीनन्दनः ॥ २५ ॥

Item No. 94.

उपासता मात्मविदः पुराणाः
परं पुमांसं निहितं गुहायाम्।
वयं यशोदाशिशुबाल लीला
कथा सुधासिन्धुषु लीलयामः ॥ २६ ॥

Item No. 95.

गोपालाजिरकर्द मे विहरसे विप्राध्वरे लज्जसे
ब्रूष गोकुलहुङ्कृतैः स्तुतिशतैर्मौनं विधत्से विदाम्।
दास्यं गोकुल पुंश्चलीषु कुरुषे स्वाम्यं न दान्तातमसु
ज्ञातं कृष्ण तवाङ्घ्रि पङ्कजयुगं प्रेम्णाचलं मञ्जुलम् ॥ २७ ॥

Item No. 96.

अवताराः सन्त्वन्ये
सरसिजनयनस्य सर्वतो भद्राः।
कृष्णादन्यः कोवा
प्रभवति गो–गोप–गोपिकामुक्त्यै ॥ २८ ॥

Item No. 97.

लोकानुन्मदयन् श्रुतिर्मुखरयन् क्षोणीरुहान् हर्षयन्
शैलान्विद्रवयन् मृगान्विवशयन्गो बृन्दमानन्दयन्।
गोपान् संभ्रमयन् मुनीन्मुकुलयन् सप्तस्वरान् जृम्भय-
न्नोङ्करार्थमुदीरयन्विजयते वंशीनिनाद शिशोः ॥ २९ ॥

Item No. 98.

स कोऽपि बालस्सरसीरुहाक्ष
स्सा च व्रजस्त्रीजनपादधूलिः।
मुहुस्तदेतद्युगलं मदीये
मोमुह्यमानेऽपि मनस्युदेतु ॥ ३० ॥

Item No. 99.

आताम्रपाणि कमल प्रणय प्रतोद
मालोलहार मणि कुण्डल हेम सूत्रम् ।
आविश्रमाम्बुकणमम्बुदनीलमव्या
दाद्यं धनञ्जयरथाभरणं महो नः ॥ ३१ ॥

Item No. 100.

अयि मुरलि मुकुन्दस्मेर वक्त्रारविन्द
श्वसन मधुरसज्ञे त्वां प्रणम्याद्य याचे ।
अधर मणि समीपं प्राप्तवत्यां भवत्यां
कथय रहसि कर्णे मद्दशां नन्दसूनोः ॥ ३२ ॥

Item No. 101.

कदा नु कस्यां नु विपद्दशायां
कैशोरगन्धिः करुणाम्बुधिर्नः ।
विलोचनाभ्यां विपुलायताभ्यां
व्यालोकयिष्यन्विषयो करोति ॥ ३३ ॥

Item No. 102.

त्वयि प्रसन्ने मम किं गुणेन
त्वय्यप्रसन्ने मम किं गुणेन ।
रक्ते विरक्ते च वरे वधुनां
निरर्थकः कुङ्कुम पत्रभङ्गः ॥ ३४ ॥

Item No. 103.

यत्रवा यत्रवा देव
यदि विश्वसिम स्त्वयि ।
निर्वाणमपि दुर्वरि-
मर्वाचीनानि किं पुनः ॥ ३५ ॥

Item No. 104.

व्यत्यस्तपादमवतंसितबर्हिबर्हं
साचीकृताननिवेशितवेणुरन्ध्रम् ।
तेजः परं परमकारुणिकं पुरस्तात्
प्राणप्रयाणसमये मम सन्निधत्ताम् ॥ ३६ ॥

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS

1. MUMBADEVI SANSKRIT MAHAVIDYALAYA:

An Oriental College, teaching Sanskrit and the Shastras by traditional methods.

Departments

(a) Mumbadevi Sanskrit Pathashala, for specialized Shastric studies; (b) Devidas Lallubhai Pathashala, for preliminary Shastric and Sanskrit studies; (c) Nagardas Rughnathdas Jyotish Shikshapith for specialized study of Indian Astrology and Astronomy, and (d) Purushottam Thakkar Vedashala for Vedic studies.

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For the Bhavan's diplomas (recognised by the Government of Bombay) of Shastri, Acharya and Vachaspati in Sahitya, Vyakarana, Vedanta, Jyetish.

Facilities

Free tuition to all and free boarding and lodging or scholarships to all deserving students.

2. GITA VIDYALAYA:

An Academy for the study of Indian Culture with special reference to the *Bhagavad Gita.* Classes conducted at the Bhavan and 19 centres. Examinations for the Gita Vid and Gita Visharad Diplomas are conducted and scholarships, medals and prizes are given to successful candidates.

3. MUNGALAL GOENKA SAMSHODHAN MANDIR:

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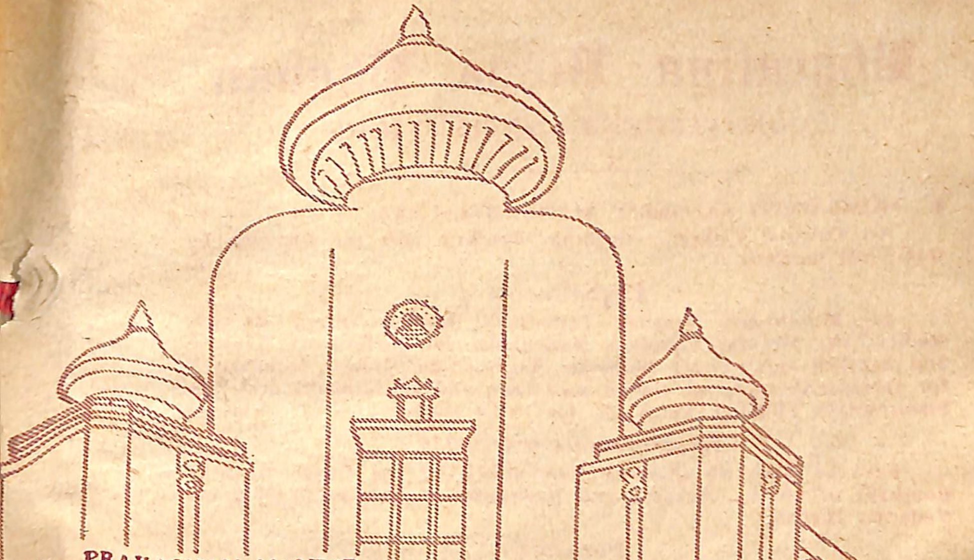
Facilities

Scholarships and free guidance to deserving scholars.

4. MUNSHI SARASVATI MANDIR (An Institute of Culture)

Departments

(a) *Library* with about 40,000 printed volumes, including rare indological volumes and a Children's section; (b) *Museum* consisting of ancient and valuable manuscripts, paintings, bronzes, etc.; (c) *All-India Cultural Essay Competition*; (d) *Bharatiya Sangit Shikshapith*—An Academy of Music for teaching and conducting research in Music—affiliated to the National Academy of Hindustani Music, Lucknow, teaching for Intermediate and Graduate courses; (e) *Bharatiya Kala Kendra*—An Academy of Arts and Dramatics, including a School of Dancing.



5. PRAKASHAN MANDIR

(a) This department publishes the results of the research work of the Bhavan, the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad and the Munshi Sahitya

(b) *The Book University*—Under this scheme, books—ancient and modern—are published in a uniform size and at a low price with a view to make the best literature and classics of India and the world available to the common man in easily understandable form.

6. M. M. COLLEGE OF ARTS & N. M. INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE:

This College of the Bhavan is affiliated to the University of Bombay for courses leading to B.A., B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc., and Ph.D. The College has a Gita Academy also.

7. ACADEMY OF PRINTING:

As a first step towards establishing an Academy of Printing, Bhavan has acquired the majority of shares in Messrs. Associated Advertisers & Printers Ltd.—one of the biggest presses in Bombay.

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